

## Russia's changing foreign policy

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## **Russia's Changing Foreign Policy**

**Bericht des BIOst Nr. 30/1996**

### **Kurzfassung**

#### *Vorbemerkung*

In diesem Bericht wird versucht, die Entwicklung der russischen Außenpolitik von ihrer klar pro-westlichen Ausrichtung in den Jahren 1991-1992 zu einer ausgewogeneren und nationalistischeren Version in der Mitte der neunziger Jahre nachzuzeichnen und zu analysieren. Dazu sollen einige Ausblicke in die Zukunft gemacht werden.

#### *Ergebnisse*

1. Die Außenpolitik des neuen Rußland war in vieler Hinsicht eine Fortsetzung des Gorbatschowschen "neuen Denkens". Gorbatschow beseitigte das militärische und politische Erbe des Stalinismus-Breshnewismus und lenkte so die Sowjetunion auf den Weg der Partnerschaft mit dem westlichen Bündnis. Diese Strategie fand volle Unterstützung bei der von Jelzin angeführten demokratischen Bewegung.
2. Nach ihrem Machtantritt distanzierten sich die Demokraten jedoch von Gorbatschows "neuem Denken". Sie argumentierten, Gorbatschow habe weiterhin "die Welt in zwei Lager geteilt", sie hingegen hätten vor, "eine völlig neue Politik uneingeschränkter Partnerschaft und Integration mit dem Westen" einzuleiten. Tatsächlich wurde diese Politik auch betrieben, denn die russischen Demokraten sahen in den westlichen Staaten ihre hauptsächlichen ideologischen und politischen Verbündeten, die Hauptquelle für wirtschaftliche Hilfe und ein Modell für die Entwicklung Rußlands.
3. Die Förderung von Bindungen zu den - nunmehr unabhängigen - ehemaligen Sowjetrepubliken wurde ein weiteres neues Element der russischen Diplomatie. Jelzin und seine Mannschaft glaubten, daß die Auflösung der UdSSR und die Zerschlagung des Kommunismus große Aussichten für wahre Freundschaft und fruchtbare Zusammenarbeit unter den neuen Nachbarn eröffnet habe.
4. Schließlich entledigte man sich des kommunistischen Erbes. Moskau ließ den Willen erkennen, historische Schandtaten der UdSSR einzugestehen und zu korrigieren. Die demokratische Regierung reduzierte ihre Aktivitäten in Osteuropa und distanzierte sich ebenso von den verbliebenen kommunistischen Regimen und den radikalen Freunden der UdSSR in der Dritten Welt. Von diesen zeigte sich (aus verschiedenen Gründen) niemand sehr erpicht auf Zusammenarbeit mit dem neuen Rußland.
5. Mit der Zeit begannen mehrere innere und äußere Faktoren auf Jelzins ursprüngliche Strategie einzuwirken. Im Innern hatte das Scheitern der "Schocktherapie" die Schwächung der Demokraten und die Stärkung der Kommunisten und Nationalisten zur Folge. Konservati-

ver Druck auf die Außenpolitik geht nicht nur von der Opposition aus, sondern auch von innerhalb der umgebildeten Regierung.

6. Nach außen ist Rußland enttäuscht vom Verhalten des Westens: Dieser ist nicht zu einem verlässlichen ideologischen und politischen Verbündeten geworden, die Hilfe ist begrenzt, und das westliche Modell scheint auf russischem Boden nicht zu funktionieren. Auch die Beziehungen zu den ehemaligen Sowjetrepubliken haben sich als dornenreich erwiesen. Es kam zu Kontroversen um die russische Diaspora, die Aufteilung von Eigentum, willkürliche Grenzen usw. Der russische Rückzug aus Osteuropa und anderen Teilen der Welt brachte deutliche Verluste mit sich (wirtschaftlicher, geopolitischer und kultureller Art sowie Prestigeverlust).
7. Die Außenpolitik von Jelzin und Kosyrew wurde zum Gegenstand von Kritik, die sich zu einer umfassenden nationalen Debatte auswuchs. Die Beteiligten an dieser Debatte spalteten sich in vier größere Lager auf. Das erste von ihnen, die Westler, tritt nach wie vor für die Hauptaspekte der ursprünglichen Strategie ein. Das entgegengesetzte Lager sieht im Westen einen ewigen Feind Rußlands und schlägt vor, der vermeintlichen westlichen Bedrohung durch Bündnisse - mit den GUS-Staaten, dem Iran oder China - zu begegnen. Des weiteren gibt es Kreise, die auf der ganzen Welt Feinde Rußlands sehen und nach einer massiven Verteidigung des Vaterlands rufen. Das vierte Lager, dem viele Demokraten und Zentristen angehören, tritt für eine ausgewogenere außenpolitische Strategie ein, die offen und kooperativ ist, aber ohne pro-westliche "Schieflage". Was die russische Öffentlichkeit angeht, so sind deren Ansichten fließend und instabil. Im Allgemeinen folgt die Öffentlichkeit nach wie vor der Meinung der politischen Führer (wie es seit alters her Tradition ist).
8. Infolge der äußeren und inneren Einflüsse und insbesondere der nationalen Debatten werden die anfänglichen Motive der neuen russischen Außenpolitik allmählich modifiziert. Rußland legt wieder Gewicht auf Sicherheit, starke Streitkräfte, Auslandsaufklärung und das Schmieden strategischer Partnerschaften in verschiedenen Regionen. Nationalismus findet seinen Ausdruck im Schutz der russischen Diaspora, in der Glorifizierung der imperialen Vergangenheit Rußlands und in der Minderung der Rolle der Reuebekundung für die Untaten des kommunistischen Regimes. Die Supermachtambitionen Rußlands lassen sich in den zunehmenden Ansprüchen erkennen, die zentrale Rolle im gesamten Bereich der ehemaligen Sowjetunion zu spielen, dem exklusiven Klub der "G7" beizutreten und die russische Flagge auf allen vier Kontinenten zu zeigen. Demokratische Ideen haben keinen Einfluß mehr auf die Beziehungen des Kreml zu anderen Staaten, dagegen ermutigen wirtschaftliche Interessen Moskau, die Zusammenarbeit mit vielen Ländern der Dritten Welt wieder aufzunehmen.
9. Die revidierte Gesamtstrategie Rußlands hat noch nicht ihre endgültige Gestalt angenommen. Es scheint sich aber innerhalb der Gesellschaft ein gewisser Konsens herauszubilden. Im Wesentlichen geht er dahin, daß die russische Diplomatie weniger pro-westlich ausgerichtet sein soll, dafür mehr Ausgewogenheit, Sicherheitsbewußtsein, Supermachtorientierung, wirtschaftliche Motivation und Pragmatismus an den Tag legen sollte. Das "nahe Ausland" wird das diplomatische Tagesgeschehen Rußlands beherrschen, aber der Weg zur Integration, wie immer diese aussehen mag, wird steinig sein. Bilaterale und internationale Differenzen werden Moskaus Partnerschaft mit dem Westen beeinträchtigen. Aber die Partnerschaft wird überdauern. Beide Seiten verfügen weder über ausreichende Gründe noch über die Mittel, um zum Kollisionskurs zurückzukehren. Daneben ist ein energischeres russisches Vorgehen im asiatisch-pazifischen Raum, im Nahen Osten und in Südasien zu erwarten. Insgesamt wird

Rußland höchstwahrscheinlich eines der Kraftzentren in der entstehenden multipolaren Welt sein, und sein Verhalten wird sich nicht durch größere Aggressivität oder sonstige Eigenheiten auszeichnen als das der anderen.



## Part I. The Origins

Moscow's foreign policy is once again undergoing a noticeable change. To understand the reasons for this change, its contents and prospects, one has to, first of all, go back to the origins of the foreign policy of the new Russian state. The policy began taking shape following Russia's emergence as a sovereign and independent state - in 1991 after the defeat of the communist regime and subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

### *1.1 Gorbachev's legacy*

In many ways the foreign policy of the new Russia was the continuation of Gorbachev's "new thinking". Mikhail Gorbachev devoted himself to the dismantling of the Stalinist-Brezhnevist system. The reformation of Moscow's behavior in the international arena became part of this process.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Union was set on the path of rapprochement and even partnership with the Western alliance through the clearing away of the military and political legacy of Stalinism-Brezhnevism.<sup>2</sup> Within the framework of such a strategy the Kremlin drastically transformed its approaches to disarmament, European security and the unification of Germany. The changing view of the West as well as the evolution of the Soviet ideology, mounting economic and other internal pressures led to the reversal of the former Moscow's policies vis-a-vis other communist countries, the international communist movement and Third World nations. Gorbachev allowed East European allies to go their own ways, made peace with China, withdrew troops from Afghanistan, stopped the unqualified support of traditional allies in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. In short, the USSR voluntarily ceased to be a communist empire locked in an ideological and geopolitical confrontation with the West and instead concentrated on becoming a good partner of the West, sharing with it many values and working together on solving pressing international and global issues.<sup>3</sup> Gorbachev did not expect the traditional Soviet adversaries to make similar gigantic changes in their behavior (after all, it was the USSR which had decided to reform its own ways). However, the Soviet leader did hope that the USA and its allies would agree to the new world order based on changed realities. There was plenty of evidence that the West was moving in the right direction (though not as fast as the Kremlin desired).<sup>4</sup>

Gorbachev's "new thinking" was rejected in various degrees or even totally by many Communist party and military-industrial complex functionaries. Perceiving the West as hostile to the USSR, they characterized Gorbachev's foreign policy as detrimental to the state interests. Their attitudes originated in hurt super-power ambitions, traditional national security fears, disturbed ideological dogmas and deep-rooted cultural prejudices.<sup>5</sup> The nationalist parties which had begun emerging as the Soviet Union became more democratic also resented the Kremlin's line in international affairs.<sup>6</sup> However, the "new thinking" enjoyed full support of the majority of the democratic

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<sup>1</sup> See M. Gorbachev, *O glavnykh napravleniyakh vnyutrennei i vneshnei politiki SSSR*. Rech na syezde narodnykh deputatov 30 Maya 1989, Moscow, Politizdat, 1989, pp. 4-8.

<sup>2</sup> See M. Gorbachev, *Zhizn i reformy*, kniga II, Moscow, Novosti, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion of such a movement by the Western nations in Ya. Plyas, *Rossiia i mir na poroge XXI veka*, Moscow, Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta kommertsii, 1995, pp. 8-11.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed insight into such attitudes see *Materialy XXVII syezda KPSS*, Moscow, Politizdat, 1990.

<sup>6</sup> For a review on this subject see Eugene Rumer, *Russian National Security and Foreign Policy in Transition*, Santa Monica, Rand, 1995, pp. 1-10.

forces in the country, including the most powerful source of domestic opposition to Gorbachev - the "Democratic Russia" movement, headed by the President of the Russian republic, Boris Yeltsin.<sup>7</sup>

Criticizing the Soviet leader for his conservative shift in internal affairs in the winter of 1990-1991 democrats at the same time actively participated in the development of the new agenda of Moscow's diplomacy. In turn, Gorbachev's advisers in the foreign affairs field progressively leaned towards the democratic and towards Yeltsin's side. Among them were Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, "perestroika's" ideologist, Alexander Yakovlev, academics Yevgeni Primakov, Oleg Bogomolov, Georgi Arbatov, Yuri Ryzhov, Andrei Kokoshin and many others. In addition to Gorbachev's platform, the radical wing of democrats around Yeltsin openly called for dismantling the Soviet internal empire and making it a union of equal partners. Thus, they intended to undermine the influence of the union center and Gorbachev personally (which they finally succeeded in). Yet, the President of the USSR could not resist the trend and advocated greater freedoms for the union republics and a new union treaty himself (the decision which triggered a conservative *coup d'etat* in August 1991).<sup>8</sup>

## ***1.2 The Western connection***

Though Gorbachev's legacy had a strong impact on the foreign policy of the new Russia, Russian leaders nevertheless tried hard to dissociate themselves from the recent past. In their first appearance before the staff members of the former Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 1991 Yeltsin's then right-hand man State Secretary Gennadi Burbulis and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev categorically denied any connection with Gorbachev. Burbulis said: "The previous authorities continued to divide the world into two camps, socialist and capitalist. They still believed in the construction of the so-called communist society as something superior to the Western model. Such an attitude automatically produced a ground for new confrontations and rivalry." Kozyrev stressed that the democratic Russia was about to initiate "a completely fresh policy of unrestrained partnership and integration with the West".<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, such a strategy was launched. The democratic forces which came to power in 1991 were eager to build a brand-new, free and prosperous Russia, and all their hopes rested on the West. The West seemed to be their principle ideological and political ally. Back in 1991-1992, Burbulis, Poltoranin, Gaidar, Chubais, Kozyrev and other key members of Yeltsin's team stressed that Russia should concentrate its attention on the USA, Western Europe, and Japan. These "rich, developed, civilized countries were indispensable for the economic, spiritual, political resurrection of Russia".<sup>10</sup> To turn away from the West, insisted the new Kremlin occupants, would mean losing a precious opportunity and leaving Russia as "the sick man of Europe".<sup>11</sup> Yeltsin repeatedly declared that Russia and the USA shared "mutual interests"<sup>12</sup> and enjoyed "stable and well-regulated relations based on partnership"<sup>13</sup> thus rendering "parity in nuclear strength unnecessary". In his speech at the session of the UN Security Council on January 31, 1992 President Yeltsin emphasized the fact that Russia "considered the United States and other

<sup>7</sup> See A. Kozyrev, *Preobrazhenie*, Moscow, Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1995.

<sup>8</sup> M. Gorbachev, *Zhizn...*, op. cit., especially pp. 493-602.

<sup>9</sup> The author of this article participated in that event and took notes.

<sup>10</sup> See *Izvestiya*, 27 September 1991; *Megapolis Express*, 7 October 1992; *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, 1993, No. 2, pp. 5-22; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 18 August 1992; *Novoe Vremya*, No. 23, 1992.

<sup>11</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, *Preobrazhenie ili Kafkianskaya metamorfoza*, in: *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 August 1992.

<sup>12</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 29 April 1993.

<sup>13</sup> RIA, 14 January 1994.

Western countries not only as partners but as allies".<sup>14</sup> Yeltsin explained that Moscow now shared basic foreign policy principles with the West: "Supremacy of democratic human rights and freedoms, legality and morals".<sup>15</sup> The priority of the West in Russia's diplomacy was also justified by the necessity to reduce and eliminate strategic nuclear weapons and solve other major international problems.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the fact that the West openly sided with Yeltsin and his democratic camp in their struggle with internal foes was even more significant. Shortly before the August 1991 coup pro-Yeltsin Moscow Mayor Popov secretly appealed to the American ambassador for help.<sup>17</sup> Upon dissolution of the USSR it was President Bush whom Yeltsin telephoned first to ask for blessings (Gorbachev learned about the decision only later).<sup>18</sup>

In 1993 Yeltsin sent a message to the West requesting support for his struggle against the parliament.<sup>19</sup> Many members of the Russian democratic movement felt that the Western connection guarded the new Russia from the comeback of the internal reactionary forces. Kozyrev for instance argued that the strategic partnership with the West in itself would encourage and facilitate democratic development in Russia. Because of this Kozyrev recommended not to put too much emphasis on an "aggressive policy of defending national interests in relations with partners".<sup>20</sup>

The West was also considered the main source of aid, urgently needed for successful reforms. The Western community had the necessary material and financial potential and seemed to be ready to share it with the new Russia. At least in the beginning of 1992 all branches of the Russian government subscribed to the view that the formation of an effective, dynamically developing Russian economy and the promotion of access to the world markets for national industry and national business as a whole had become.<sup>21</sup> Even Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, who later turned into a bitter opponent of Kozyrev's line, said at that time: "In relations with the outside world we should give priority to those states, with whom cooperation in the best way possible... can help us to create a real state potential."<sup>22</sup>

Kozyrev, singling out the United States as the main target of Russian foreign policy, explained that only in relying on this "leading Western country and our biggest Eastern neighbor" could Moscow achieve its goals vis-a-vis G7, the IMF and in fact the whole world".<sup>23</sup> Gaidar for his part tried to convince both Russians and Westerners that in order to develop a market economy and to overcome the threat of the conservative revanche in Russia access to external sources of finance and integration into the global division of production, consumption, trade and labor were necessary.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Rossiyskaya gazeta, 31 January 1992. On the same subject see Yeltsin's report on the UN Security Council's proceedings in the Russia's Supreme Soviet delivered on 13 February 1992 (Rossiyskaya gazeta, 14 February 1992); Kozyrev's remarks in the UN human rights Commission (Izvestiya, 13 February 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Rossiyskaya gazeta, 31 January 1992.

<sup>16</sup> Yeltsin's statement quoted in Rossiyskaya gazeta, January 20, 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Izvestiya, 20 July 1993.

<sup>18</sup> Komsomolskaya pravda, 15 May 1994.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Shearman, Russian Policy Toward Western Europe: The German Axis, in: Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990, ed. Peter Shearman, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995, p. 99.

<sup>20</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, The Lagging Partnership, in: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 73, No. 3, 1994, p. 62.

<sup>21</sup> See Proceedings of the conference "Transfigured Russia in the New World", where most Russian leaders took the floor (Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn, 1992, No. 3-4).

<sup>22</sup> Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn, 1992, No. 3-4, p. 88.

<sup>23</sup> International Affairs, 1993, No. 2, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Rossiyskaya gazeta, 12 April 1992.

Russia's democrats also saw the West as a model of development. They wanted to westernize Russia and, as Kozyrev put it in 1991, "to achieve the historical task of transforming Russia from the dangerous sick giant of Eurasia into a member of the Western zone of co-prosperity". Kozyrev called upon compatriots "to learn from the advanced club how to live in a civilized way". To achieve this aim Kozyrev proposed: "We should prepare and implement joint programs of reforms regarding the economy, security and conversion with the direct participation of Western experts at all stages".<sup>25</sup> In 1993 "the Choice of Russia", then still a government party, connected personally to Yeltsin, stated in its program: "We consider developed democratic countries as natural partners and allies of Russia... We feel it to be very useful to join the Western security system".<sup>26</sup>

At that time V. Lukin, a prominent parliamentarian and later one of the leaders of the "Yabloko" party, which became the chief democratic opposition to Yeltsin and Kozyrev, also insisted that Moscow's overall priority was to enter the "new European home".<sup>27</sup> It was repeatedly stressed by top officials that Russia's vital interests made it absolutely necessary to join the economic and political community of the West and to become part of Europe.<sup>28</sup>

Driven by the above-mentioned motives, Russia conducted a clearly pro-Western policy. The West was consulted and listened to on internal matters. Moscow went out of its way to be co-operative, to approve the actions and positions of Western governments, and to follow a similar, if not identical, line in international affairs (for instance, in the Middle East, towards former Yugoslavia, North Korea, Cuba etc).<sup>29</sup>

### ***1.3 The "Near Abroad"***

The promotion of friendly ties with former Soviet republics - now independent states - became the second component of the new Russia's foreign policy. Yeltsin and his democratic entourage welcomed the dissolution of the USSR not only because it was the only way to unseat Gorbachev. The concept of abandoning the imperial heritage enjoyed widespread grass-roots support in the country for a number of reasons. The democratic parties and liberal intelligentsiya felt that the democratization made the collapse of the USSR inevitable. To resist it meant conflicts and wars equivalent to the Yugoslavian scenario.<sup>30</sup> Another argument was that without giving freedom to other peoples Russia would never become a normal, democratic state. Finally, Gaidar and other West-oriented economists in the government took the position that the union republics had become an economic burden and an unsurmountable obstacle to the reforms. Gaidar kept on stressing that subsidies to the republics, accommodating their material needs and caprices destroyed any hope for the success of his tight-monetary policy. Instead, Kremlin reformers recommended rebuilding ties with the former republics on the basis of mutual profitability.<sup>31</sup> At that time it was believed in Moscow that the newly independent republics would be grateful to Russia for the freedom it had granted them, and that this together with shared political and

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<sup>25</sup> Moscow News, 29 September 1991.

<sup>26</sup> Predvybornaya programma Vybora Rossii, Moscow, Politika, 1993, pp. 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> Moscow News, 10 February 1991.

<sup>28</sup> Proceedings of the meetings of the Foreign Policy Council of the RFM in November and December 1992 (Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn, 1993, No. 2, pp. 5-22; see also V. Chernov, Natsionalnye interesy Rossii i ugrozy ee bezopasnosti, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta, 29 April 1993).

<sup>29</sup> For a Western assessment of this policy see, for example, ed. Peter Shearman, Russian Foreign Policy, op. cit., pp. 71-134, 267-302.

<sup>30</sup> Izvestiya, 2 January 1992.

<sup>31</sup> Reformy, Moscow, Nauchnaya kniga, 1995, p. 29-30.

economic values would enable the former union members to cooperate in building a better future (without tying each other's hands as might have been the case had the USSR continued to exist).<sup>32</sup> In addition, there was the clear expectation that Russia, as the most powerful state, would be accepted as the natural leader among equals.<sup>33</sup>

Many Russian policy-makers, as well as ordinary Russians, also held a naive and sentimental perception as to the degree of which other nationalities longed for continued association.<sup>34</sup> On a more rational level, the Russian leadership assumed that integration impulses would be strong due to close economic links, the united military base and similar diplomatic tasks of the former Soviet republics.<sup>35</sup> Besides, the new Russian leaders shared a history of opposition to the Soviet system and the Communist party with most of the other young governments. Even if there were manifestations of hostility towards Russia and Russians in some newly-born states, they were interpreted in the Kremlin as being directed at the old regime and consequently temporary in nature.<sup>36</sup> Leaders in Moscow came to the definite conclusion that the disintegration of the Soviet republics would stop: "The period of emotional euphoria because of political independence will quickly pass and a new period of mutual gravitation will start".<sup>37</sup> To assure such a process, as Kozyrev believed, it was sufficient to build relations with the newly independent countries "based on principles successfully tested in Europe - non-violability and openness of borders, human rights and minority rights as well as mutually beneficial cooperation".<sup>38</sup> At the beginning of 1992 Kozyrev argued that "ideas of unity of our peoples (peoples of the former USSR -Ye.B.) are already being filled with substance; agreements have been achieved regarding the united defense and the united strategic-military sphere and the framework for social and economic interactions is taking shape". The Russian Foreign Minister called for "continued efforts to build on the achieved".<sup>39</sup>

All in all, the new Russian government had no intention of abandoning the "post-Soviet sphere" as something unimportant and burdensome (as critics claim now). On the contrary, right from the start the Kremlin, and the Foreign Minister in particular, stressed that relations with the former republics were "the main priority" and that Russia had "vital interests" regarding the entire territory of the defunct Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup>

#### ***1.4 Overcoming the Soviet heritage***

The third element of the foreign policy of Russia's democratic leadership was a rejection of the heritage of the communist Soviet Union. Moscow displayed a readiness for self-criticism, for the admission of historical misdeeds and a willingness to correct them through concessions or other methods. The Kremlin expressed penitence for the invasions of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan, annexation of the Baltic republics, domination over East Germany, manipulation of "liberation movements" and communist parties throughout the globe, shooting down a South

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<sup>32</sup> Perspektivy evraziyskoi integratsii, Moscow, Print, 1994, especially pp. 59-61.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 54-55.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 45-48.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Kontseptsiya obyedineniya vooruzhennykh sil otsenivaetsya, in: Izvestiya, 31 December 1991.

<sup>36</sup> Perspektivy..., op. cit., pp. 59-61.

<sup>37</sup> Ya. Plyas, Rossiya i..., op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>38</sup> Moscow News, 16 February 1991.

<sup>39</sup> Izvestiya, 2 January 1992.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. See also Ya. Plyas, ... op. cit., p. 91.

Korean aircraft in 1983, mistreatment of the Japanese P.O.W.'s in the late 1940s, spying against the West, and numerous other mistakes and crimes.

There were definite changes in Russia's policies vis-a-vis Eastern Europe, remaining communist regimes and communist parties as well as countries of the Third World. Some observers, including Western ones, claim that Eastern Europe became "the region of forgotten neighbors of Russia",<sup>41</sup> that Moscow adopted a policy of "benign neglect" and made little effort in developing a comprehensive policy regarding the region as a whole.<sup>42</sup> One certainly can agree with the argument that Moscow, even back in the late-Gorbachev period, decided against retaining the "outer empire" because of political, economic and strategic considerations: "No longer did Moscow want to keep the West at a distance; instead it wished to draw closer and become a respected member of the world community; under those circumstances the East European buffer looked an increasingly costly encumbrance to improved relations with the West".<sup>43</sup>

However, as we see it, the main rationale for the change in Moscow's policy regarding Eastern Europe was the fact, that the communist regimes there were rejected as much as Russian democrats rejected the domestic communist regime. It did not mean that Russia lost interest in Eastern Europe, it rather wanted to deal with reformed neighbors, and felt the cooperation could work well with them. President Yeltsin himself repeatedly talked about the continuing strategic importance of Eastern Europe, implying an active Russian role there.<sup>44</sup> What happened, though, was that the East European nations themselves, like released prisoners, scattered in various directions as soon as the doors of the Soviet empire were suddenly opened wide before them.<sup>45</sup> Under such circumstances it was hardly possible to conduct a successful policy in that region.

As for the communist states - North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam - they also did not display enthusiasm concerning the events in Russia, but for different reasons. They were shocked by the anti-communist posture of the new Russian leaders and feared that the "democratic fever" could penetrate their own turf by the way of example or through determined efforts of the Russian democrats. Moscow on its part consciously broke all ideological links and terminated special relations with the remaining communist states, among other things expecting their early demise. The Kremlin joined Western nations in the condemnation of human rights violations in Cuba and North Korea.<sup>46</sup> The relations between the new Russian state and China also did not start in a particularly auspicious way either. Victorious Russian democrats despised the Chinese communist regime because of the Tiananmen massacre of the local democrats in 1989 and Beijing's support of the pro-communist coup in Moscow in August 1991. Chinese authorities, as other communist regimes, feared Moscow's interference in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of China.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Mike Bowker, Russian Polity Toward Central and Eastern Europe, in: ed. Peter Shearman, Russian Foreign Policy ... op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>42</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, East Central Europe, in: ed. Zalmay Khalilzad, Strategic Appraisal 1996, Santa Monica, Rand, p. 132. See also F. Stephen Larrabee, East European Military Security after the Cold War, Santa Monica, Rand, 1993.

<sup>43</sup> Mike Bowker, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>44</sup> Rossiyskie vesti, 29 October 1992, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> See Ye. Bazhanov, Top Priorities of Russia's Foreign Policy, in: New Times, October 1995, p. 32.

<sup>46</sup> For details on Moscow's relations with Cuba, N. Korea, Vietnam see Latinskaya America, No. 10-11, 1992; Ye. Bazhanov and N. Bazhanova, Russia and Asia in 1992, in: Asian Survey, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, January 1993, pp. 91-109.

<sup>47</sup> For more details see Ye. Bazhanov, Russian Policy Towards China, in: ed. Peter Shearman, Russian Foreign Policy..., op. cit., pp. 161-164.

The Kremlin's relations with ideological and geopolitical partners in the Third World that reach back to Soviet times also deteriorated. The Kremlin ceased to compete with the United States and it did not want to be manipulated by radical regimes which hoped to continue thriving on the contradictions between the "two super-powers". Instead, Moscow proposed to develop a partnership with the West which could serve as a bridge between the opposing sides in those regions (as, for example, in the Middle East). The former Soviet practices, when the USSR had relied on a handful of states in the Middle East and other parts of the world, were characterized by the new Russian leaders as "an extremely unfortunate choice".<sup>48</sup> Economic incentives to maintain cooperation with the traditional Soviet clients did not exist either. The entire Russian society demanded to stop helping any foreign countries and to concentrate instead on internal reforms. When elected President of the Russian Federation in 1991, Boris Yeltsin condemned the squandering of national resources,<sup>49</sup> and in October 1991 he placed a ban on all foreign aid.<sup>50</sup> Attempts were made to turn cooperation with the Third World "friends" into mutually beneficial relations, but they did not yield immediate results.

Russia's relations with Syria, Iraq and Libya deteriorated.<sup>51</sup> They also declined with India, Mongolia and a number of other states in South and East Asia.<sup>52</sup> In Sub-Saharan Africa the same pattern developed. Even under Gorbachev the Soviet Union sharply reduced support for socialist-oriented states while calling for political compromises to end regional disputes. This fact prompted one Russian political scientist to talk about the "collapse" of the USSR's African policy.<sup>53</sup> With Yeltsin in power Moscow reinforced its decision to get rid of "the ideological blinkers and the wasteful nature of the ties" with African countries.<sup>54</sup> The resulting policy of the Kremlin was met with resentment in Black Africa, this applied especially to the Russian pressure to make them repay their debts.<sup>55</sup>

At the same time the new Russian government made considerable efforts to develop both political and economic relations with "stable, moderate and economically successful states" of the Third World.<sup>56</sup> Many of them, as a matter of fact, were ignored by the Soviet Union, or they themselves ignored the communist giant. Russia made bold moves to promote its arms sales and other forms of trade and economic interaction with the Persian Gulf States. This line of activity started back in the spring of 1992 with Kozyrev's visit to that region.<sup>57</sup> Considerable success was achieved in the field of promoting political understanding and economic cooperation with Iran and South Africa,<sup>58</sup> South Korea, Taiwan, the ASEAN countries, Australia and New Zealand.<sup>59</sup> Certain steps were taken to enforce ties with Latin American nations, though basically Russia kept a low

<sup>48</sup> The Current Digest, Vol. XLIV, No. 18, 1992, pp. 15-16.

<sup>49</sup> Moscow News, No. 9, 1991.

<sup>50</sup> Izvestiya, 28 October 1991.

<sup>51</sup> Amin Saikal, Russian Policy Toward Central Asia and the Middle East, in: ed. Peter Shearman, Russian Foreign Policy..., op. cit., pp. 267-282.

<sup>52</sup> For details see Ye. Bazhanov and N. Bazhanova, Russia and Asia in 1992, op. cit., pp. 98-99. Bhabani Sengupta, Former Friends: Time to Rebuild India-Russia Ties, in: Statesman Weekly (Calcutta), 29 February 1992, p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> A. Kiva, Afrika: i zdes zanovo?, in: Literaturnaya gazeta, 29 May 1991.

<sup>54</sup> Izvestiya, December 6, 1992.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Quist Adade, Russia to Swap Africa Debts for Food, in: New African, July 1992, pp. 32-33.

<sup>56</sup> Reuters, 30 April 1992.

<sup>57</sup> See Amin Saikal, op. cit., p. 272-274.

<sup>58</sup> See Robert G. Patman, Russia's New Agenda in Sub-Saharan Africa, in: ed. Peter Shearman, Russian Foreign Policy..., op. cit., pp. 292-294.

<sup>59</sup> Ye. Bazhanov and N. Bazhanova, Russia and Asia..., op. cit., pp. 97-98, 101.

profile in that distant continent, not challenging the USA there anymore, but neither developing a pro-Western tinge in its policy.<sup>60</sup>

Such was the original thrust of the Russian foreign policy after the events of 1991. Partially it had been prepared by and based on Gorbachev's "new thinking". However, the new policy marked a great shift towards the West away from the traditional friends and concepts, as well as a denunciation of the past. Many facets of the original strategy of Russia's democrats still exist and can be witnessed in various moves and statements of Russia's leaders. Nevertheless, accelerating change in Moscow's foreign policy is also obvious. It is influenced by a number of internal and external factors.

## **Part II. Factors of Change**

### ***2.1 Internal situation***

Internally, the failure of "shock therapy" has delivered a powerful blow to the camp of the radical reformers. They lost confidence, then unity as they split into warring factions. Quite a few simply left politics, others got engrossed in money making, corruption and the quest for privileges. Many democrats switched to the ranks of the opposition (former vice-president Alexander Rutskoi and Supreme Soviet speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, to name the most prominent defectors). The parliamentary elections of December 1993 made it clear that, above all, democrats had lost support among wide circles of the Russian population.<sup>61</sup>

The parliamentary elections of 1995 gave even more clout to the opposition forces, especially the communists.<sup>62</sup> They do not yet control the foreign policy, but their impact on the conduct of Russian diplomacy is increasingly felt. This pressure emanates from the conservative parliament, the "power" ministries (defense, interior etc.), military-industrial complex, significant segments of local elites and Russians living in the former republics of the Soviet Union. It is reinforced by various groups of democrats who are disappointed for various reasons with Yeltsin and his international strategy.<sup>63</sup> As a result, the influential paper "Izvestiya" wrote in October 1995, "popularity of ardent pro-Western politicians among Russian voters suffered quite profoundly".<sup>64</sup>

Equally important is the fact that the government itself is different - radical democrats have been replaced by representatives of the old Soviet bureaucracy, most of whom agree with the public discontent over the foreign policy of 1991.<sup>65</sup> The original democrats, still present in the ruling circles, are adjusting to the changing mood - some because of an instinct for self-preservation, others because they have come to realize that they had been naive in the past or that international

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<sup>60</sup> Yuri Pavlov, Russian Policy Towards Latin America and Cuba, in: ed. Peter Shearman, Russian Foreign Policy..., op. cit., p. 257.

<sup>61</sup> Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) won 23% of the votes for the party lists in 1993. It was followed by the communists and agrarians. Gaidar's and other democratic parties did not do well (Izvestiya, 20 January 1994).

<sup>62</sup> "Leftists" got control of 60% seats in the State Duma.

<sup>63</sup> For details on the emergence of various and contradictory interests in the Russian society see Ot reformy k stabilizatsii, Moscow, MGIMO, 1995, pp. 123-131, 236-237, 241-248, 258, 262-263, 269-272, 275.

<sup>64</sup> Izvestiya, 13 October 1995.

<sup>65</sup> Among those "hardcore" democrats who left the government (voluntarily or otherwise) were Burbulis, Gaidar, Fedorov, Poltoranin, Starovoitova, Shakhrai, Shelov-Kovedyaev, Shokhin, Filatov. Influential posts dealing with national security have been held by people, who oppose anti-western, pro-communist and anti-democratic ideas in various degrees - Korshakov, Barsukov, Yegorov, Lobov, Soskovets etc.



realities have changed since 1991.<sup>66</sup> An excellent analysis of the growing impact of the conservatives on Yeltsin's foreign policy is contained in Neil Malcolm's article on Russian foreign policy decision-making.<sup>67</sup>

Another internal factor influencing the conduct of the Russian diplomacy is Russia's all embracing political, economic and social crisis. The government is so preoccupied with domestic problems that it simply does not have time to act adequately in the international arena. Due to internal predicaments, negotiations with foreign dignitaries are sometimes cancelled and state visits abroad are cut short. There is little opportunity to concentrate on the development of a coherent, well-thought-out strategy in world affairs. When Moscow does act, more often than not its behavior is dictated by events at home: either outside support is sought against domestic foes or additional financial aid is requested to avert a total economic collapse.<sup>68</sup> The feeling of insecurity is further deepened by the collapse of Russia's defense industries. As experts claim, "the capability of the defense complex to satisfy the needs of the armed forces in armaments and military equipment is in danger".<sup>69</sup>

The absence of an effective mechanism for the implementation of the foreign policy makes things even worse. Back in the communist days that mechanism was simple and quite effective. One pyramid of authority existed with the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party at the top. The Politburo passed resolutions and all branches of the foreign policy apparatus knew exactly what they were supposed to do. Nowadays a number of independent or semi-independent "Politburos" function in Moscow, each competing with the others and attempting to pursue its own foreign policy. The result is chaos from which it is difficult to discern the essence of Russia's position on important international issues. It is a universally accepted fact that various government agencies pursue their own and contradictory national security policy.<sup>70</sup> Numerous attempts by Yeltsin to put the foreign policy mechanism in order did not work.<sup>71</sup> To a certain degree difficulties in the field of foreign policy were enhanced by the weaknesses of the diplomatic personnel. A typical argument is that unexperienced, young officials "did not initially understand the tough world of 'Realpolitik', only too late did they realize that Russia had its own national-state interests, not necessarily identical with interests of America and the states of Western Europe which were anxious to fill the geopolitical vacuum in Eastern Europe and not only there".<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev is a good example of those who had to suppress or change original views not only on foreign, but also on domestic issues.

<sup>67</sup> It can be found in ed. Peter Shearman, *Russian...*, op. cit., pp. 23-51.

<sup>68</sup> For a good western appraisal of Russia's internal weaknesses and their impact on foreign policy see Fritz Ermarth, *Russia*, in: ed. Zalmay Khalilzad, op. cit., pp. 73-81, 89-90. See also Ya. Plyas, *Rossiia i mir...*, op. cit., pp. 30-35, 71; N. Kosolapov, *Rossiysko-amerikanskii otnosheniya: partnerskie svyazi i natsionalnye interesy*, in: *Diplomaticheskii Ezhegodnik*, Moscow, The Diplomatic Academy, 1996 (in print).

<sup>69</sup> *Polozhenie del v oboronnykh otraslyakh promyshlennosti*, League of Support to the Russia's Defense Enterprises, round table, 22 February 1996, The proceedings, Moscow, 1996, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> B. Gromov, *O nekotorykh problemakh voennoi bezopasosti Rossiyskoi Federatsii*, A report, Russia's State Duma, Moscow, March 1996, pp. 4, 10. *Ot reformy...*, op. cit., pp. 92, 98-99, 102. Sherman Garnett, *Russian Power in the New Eurasia*. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 1996, pp. 35-37.

<sup>71</sup> See Ya. Plyas, *Rossiia i...*, op. cit., p. 93. Kozyrev's article in *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 2 February 1994. In December 1995 the Council on Foreign Policy was established as the coordinating body in this field by presidential decree. Nothing came of this project either. In the spring of 1996 the coordinating function was returned to the Foreign Ministry (*Segodnya*, 10 April 1996).

<sup>72</sup> *Izvestiya*, 13 October 1995.

## 2.2 Behavior of the West

Among those external factors which have produced changes in Russian foreign policy, the behavior of the West should be singled out. I think it is indisputable that the West has not delivered what it has promised Russia. In any case, this is a common belief among Russians, including many democrats.<sup>73</sup> The West, the argument goes, has failed to become a reliable ideological and political ally. Quite a few politicians in the West prefer Russia to remain weak and poor, regarding it as a potential foe.<sup>74</sup> The NATO eastward expansion is treated in Moscow as a betrayal,<sup>75</sup> expression of distrust and even hostile attitude towards Russia,<sup>76</sup> an attempt to isolate it by a new "Iron Curtain" and finally as a security challenge.<sup>77</sup> In the fall of 1995 Yeltsin himself went as far as warning that the NATO enlargement could "light the fires of war all over Europe".<sup>78</sup>

In Russian political circles including the government, the unilateral NATO actions in Bosnia,<sup>79</sup> the refusal to support Russia's complaints about mistreatment of the Russian speaking population in the Baltic republics,<sup>80</sup> the attempts to influence Russia's relations with Arab countries (such as Iraq or Libya)<sup>81</sup> and the pro-Japanese stand on the Kuril islands dispute between Moscow and Tokyo have been regarded as unfriendly moves. Russia has been upset about the unwillingness of the West to endorse the reintegration of the former Soviet republics and especially the leading role of Moscow in that area.<sup>82</sup> For the Kremlin this is another proof that the West does not treat Russia in a friendly manner and does not respect Moscow's vital interests. Kozyrev angrily rejected the Western attitude saying that Moscow would not listen to "lessons and lectures" on the Russian behavior in the former USSR.<sup>83</sup> The Minister repeatedly called upon the West to recognize "Russia's special role and responsibility in the former Soviet Union".<sup>84</sup>

Russians are unhappy with the results of the economic cooperation with the West. The West is criticized for not substantially extending their aid to crisis-stricken Russia. Loans and credits are small and highly conditional.<sup>85</sup> Investments are negligible.<sup>86</sup> Many Western businesspeople "rob" Russia, buying up its natural resources for pennies. The West, Russians complain, is trying to

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<sup>73</sup> It is equally true that Russia and the Russians gave the West plenty of reasons to behave exactly the way it has been behaving.

<sup>74</sup> See Ya. Plyas, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>75</sup> *New Times*, No. 6, 1994. The magazine, quoting top Russian officials and scholars, stressed that it was not fear of the direct military threat so much as the psychological consequences that would result. It was said that NATO expansion would be an obstacle on the way of "uniting all democratic states of the continent".

<sup>76</sup> See Defense Minister P. Grachev's statement in *Moscow Times*, 28 March 1996; Foreign Minister Ye. Primakov's article in *Izvestiya*, 6 March 1996.

<sup>77</sup> Yevgeni Primakov, then the head of Intelligence, said in November 1993: "This expansion would bring the biggest military union in the world ... directly to the borders of Russia ... The need will arise for a fundamental reappraisal of all defense concepts on our side..." (A press-conference minutes, Russia's Foreign Ministry, 25 November 1993).

<sup>78</sup> *New York Times*, 11 September 1995.

<sup>79</sup> See *Izvestiya* 20 April 1994; F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Balkans*, in: ed. Zalmay Khalilzad, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>80</sup> *Segodnya*, 15 October 1994.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> On the Western attitude see Wynne Russell, *Russian Relations with the "Near Abroad"*, in: ed. Peter Shearman, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-70.

<sup>83</sup> *The New York Times*, 28 January 1994.

<sup>84</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, *The Lagging Partnership...*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>85</sup> A statement by Viktor Gerashchenko, the head of Russia's State Bank, *Segodnya*, 22 April 1994.

<sup>86</sup> *Ot reformy k stabilizatsii...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-70.

turn the former super-power into an "economic colony" of the developed world.<sup>87</sup> In exchange for valuable resources, the West ships "out-dated and dangerous items" (like cigarettes or phony medicine) to Russia.<sup>88</sup> Technology transfer is still impeded by legislative restrictions.<sup>89</sup> And when Russia tries to earn money by exporting its own technology, its moves are blocked.<sup>90</sup> Among publicized cases are Russo-American tensions over sales of cryogenic engines to India, military aircraft to Malaysia, nuclear equipment to Iran etc.<sup>91</sup>

There is also disappointment with the West as a model for Russia's development. An increasing number of even reform-minded people believes that Western recipes cannot be copied, Russia is too different, too unique to follow Western methods.<sup>92</sup> Western advisers to the Russian government have become the target of vicious attacks. Their Russian admirers (among them former Prime Minister Gaidar) are equally denounced.<sup>93</sup> Complaints are heard that the West, especially Washington, currently looks down on Russia and the Russians, treats them as second-rate citizens, openly shows disrespect for Moscow and insults Russia.

In fact, unequal relations do exist between the West and Russia, which are inevitable:<sup>94</sup> Moscow depends on the West not only economically, but politically as well. This dependence was still evident on the eve of the 1996 presidential elections in Russia. Washington used every opportunity to support Yeltsin, be it with the IMF loans, restrained treatment of Russia's behavior in the world arena, silence regarding Moscow's military operations in Chechnya, etc.<sup>95</sup> Yeltsin again solicited the help of President Bill Clinton stressing that the US President "must support Russia which means supporting B. Yeltsin".<sup>96</sup>

### **2.3 Other problems**

The relations with the former republics of the USSR are another important external factor influencing Russian foreign policy. Democrats in Moscow have shed their initial illusions that relations among former parts of the USSR will develop in a friendly and smooth manner. Right from the start, most of Russia's new neighbors displayed open disgust for Russia and the Russians. Monuments to Russian poets were demolished and ethnic Russians were denied basic rights. Russians in the "near abroad" have become a serious headache for all those involved. The problems concern the right of Russians and Russian speaking people to remain unmolested on the territory of the former Soviet Union, their right to become citizens of the newly independent states, their autonomy, the absorption of a huge flow of refugees, etc. These problems are exacerbated by the economic and social crisis, rising nationalism, demographic fears of small

<sup>87</sup> Moskovskie novosti, 21 March 1993.

<sup>88</sup> Ot reformy k stabilizatsii..., op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>89</sup> Izvestiya, 3 March 1993; Ot reformy k stabilizatsii..., op. cit., pp. 66-67, 70-71.

<sup>90</sup> A statement by Russia's then Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Petr Aven, in: Segodnya, 29 October 1992.

<sup>91</sup> See Peter Shearman, Russian Policy Toward the United States, in: ed. Peter Shearman, op. cit., p. 127.

<sup>92</sup> Reformy po zapadnomu obraztsu? Moscow, Nauchnaya kniga, 1996, especially pp. 10-15; 20-28.

<sup>93</sup> Among others, Sergei Glaziev, a prominent politician and economist and initially a member of Yeltsin's team, bitterly attacked "irresponsible foreign advisers" and "IMF-tailored reforms" for ruining the Russian economy. See S. Glaziev, Rossiya, kotoruyu obmanuli, in: Segodnya, 29 March 1996.

<sup>94</sup> Even Western scholars subscribe to such a view. One of them (of Soviet origin) says: "In the West, there is a strong tendency to view Russia as a defeated super-power that must go through a long period of reflection and redemption akin to that of postwar Germany and Japan". (Dimitry Simes, The Return of Russian History, in: Foreign Affairs, January/February 1994, p. 77).

<sup>95</sup> On this account see: IMF Loan: Good Call, with Strings, editorial, in: Moscow Times, 28 March 1996.

<sup>96</sup> Izvestiya, 4 April 1996.

nations, like Latvia or Estonia etc.<sup>97</sup> There are also controversies over the division of property, arbitrary borders, economic equality, political, ideological, historical issues etc.<sup>98</sup>

While there is a certain desire of the new governments to cooperate more intensively with the Kremlin, the prevailing mood is nevertheless to safeguard the newly won independence. There are suspicions that Russia may try to challenge them. Also, the leaders of the newly independent states have a tendency to see a Russian hand behind their difficulties, and to look for protection against Russia's alleged encroachments elsewhere - in the West, in the South, in the East.<sup>99</sup> Reciprocal moves by the "would-be-protectors" of the newly independent states make Moscow even more nervous. Such moves feed fears that Russia will be pushed out of its traditional sphere of influence, isolated and will suffer economically, politically and strategically.<sup>100</sup> An expressed desire of almost every East European state to join NATO has greatly increased Moscow's attention to its former partners in the Warsaw Pact. It has revealed that the East European nations do not look at the new Russia as an ideological and political friend, but rather consider Moscow to be a threat to their security and sovereignty.<sup>101</sup> Difficult issues have arisen before the Kremlin: The questions are how to keep the East Europeans out of NATO and how to attract them closer to Russia?<sup>102</sup>

The retreats from the remaining communist countries have created additional difficulties for the Russian diplomacy. Consequently, Russia not only lost certain economic opportunities in North Korea, but it also lost its influence on the regime and thus on the promotion of stability and peace in the vicinity of its own borders.<sup>103</sup> China's aloofness was even more damaging to Russia's interests, especially in the light of the fact that the West did not meet Moscow's expectations. China increasingly seemed to become a useful strategic partner, a valuable customer, interested in Russia's industrial equipment and armaments and a vehicle for Moscow's expansion into Asia and the Pacific etc.<sup>104</sup>

Due to its disappointment regarding the amount of support from the USA and Western Europe Moscow realized it would be easier to top up its financial resources and technology with the help of the fast developing economies of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the ASEAN states.<sup>105</sup> There were geo-strategic as well as economic reasons for going back to Mongolia and Indochina.<sup>106</sup> The slackening cooperation with India equally seemed to be a mistake. In 1993 Yeltsin himself acknowledged this fact saying that the people and politicians of India and Russia "have a great accumulated wealth of political goodwill and diplomatic traditions".<sup>107</sup> As Moscow was gradually realizing, no strong foreign policy was possible "without India or without taking into consideration India's interests, its global weight and its authority".<sup>108</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Ed. A. Shutov, Problemy SNG, Moscow, Diplomaticheskaya Akademiya, 1995, pp. 20-26, 40, 50-60.

<sup>98</sup> Scientific Council of the Russia's Foreign Ministry, Minutes of the 15 October 1994 meeting (unpublished), pp. 14, 19, 33-36, 62-69, 72-75.

<sup>99</sup> Ot reformy k..., op. cit., pp 22-23.

<sup>100</sup> Rossiya i SNG: Nuzhdaetsya li v korektirovke pozitsiya Zapada?, Moscow, Sluzhba Vneshnei Razvedki Rossiyskoi Federatsii, 1993.

<sup>101</sup> On this issue see Rossiya i Vostochnya Evropa, Moscow, Institut aktualnykh mezhdunarodnykh problem (IAMP), 1994, pp. 111-121.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pp. 98-107.

<sup>103</sup> See Eugene Bazhanov and Natasha Bazhanova, Russia and Asia in 1993, in: Asian Survey, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, January 1994, pp. 164-169.

<sup>104</sup> See Eugene Bazhanov, Russian Policy Toward China, op. cit., pp. 164-169.

<sup>105</sup> See Eugene Bazhanov and Natasha Bazhanova, Russia and Asia in 1993, op. cit., pp. 87-97.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> The Guardian, 1 February 1993.

<sup>108</sup> Nezavisimaya gazeta, 30 January 1993.

The Middle East restored its importance in the eyes of the Kremlin leaders as well. Iran was recognized as a lucrative arms customer and an important fulcrum of Moscow's interests in the region. Teheran could be useful in restraining Islamic radicalism in Central Asia and Transcaucasia. Russo-Iranian friendship could encourage the Arab states (especially the Gulf's oil-rich ones) and Turkey to defer to Russia as the only power with the leverage to stop Iran from destabilizing the region further.<sup>109</sup> The deterioration of relations with the Soviet allies in the Middle East - Iraq, Syria, Libya - prevented Moscow from recovering debts amounting to over 10 billion US-Dollars.<sup>110</sup> Russia's support of the sanctions against Iraq and Libya has also become an economic disaster for Moscow: its total loss has been around 16 billion US-Dollars.<sup>111</sup> Having lost the connections with the old friends of the USSR Russia was not able to play a significant role as a broker in the peace process in the Middle East.<sup>112</sup> Moscow's policy regarding the conflict between Arabs and Israelis was progressively subordinated to the American activities. On the whole, Russia was losing ground in a strategically important, unstable region close to the Russian borders and influencing Russian security.<sup>113</sup> There were clear losses - economic, geopolitical, cultural and in prestige - in Black Africa and Latin America due to the pro-Western "tilt" in Moscow's foreign policy and its low-profile in other regions of the world.<sup>114</sup>

Moscow's foreign policy also evolved in reaction to changes in the world at large. Just a few years ago, both Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's supporters talked quite seriously about creating one close-knit family of nations, encompassing all of mankind. One of Gorbachev's assistants, Georgi Shakhnazarov, went so far as to propose the establishment of a world government on the basis of UN structures.<sup>115</sup> It seemed to Russian (Soviet) democrats that with the end of the Cold War between the two ideological camps and the two super-powers nothing could cloud harmony and brotherhood on the planet. Now, of course, that dream is over. Even high-school students realize that the world of today is instable, fraught with national, religious, territorial, racial and other conflicts.

## Part III. Debates

### 3.1 Westernizers

Due to the internal and external factors, discussed in Part II, Yeltsin's and Kozyrev's foreign policy became the target of criticism. It was getting ever stronger and grew into a full-scale national debate. The debate has been closely connected with the question of the overall development strategy for the country: What should Russia's priorities be? What measures should be taken by the Russian people? The diversified views reflect the emergence of a pluralistic society in its transitional stage in Russia. Newly formed economic and social groups compete for influence, power, profit and intensely search for the appropriate ideological and political expression of their interests. The picture is further complicated by large numbers of young intellectuals, who strive for recognition and exploit difficulties of the country for self-promotion. The old ruling

<sup>109</sup> Stephen Blank, Russia and Iran in a New Middle East, in: *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1992, pp. 125-126.

<sup>110</sup> *Izvestiya*, 30 March 1996.

<sup>111</sup> *Izvestiya*, 8 December 1992.

<sup>112</sup> See Amin Saikal, *Russian Policy...*, op. cit., pp. 277-279.

<sup>113</sup> *Ot reformy k...*, op. cit., pp. 83-84, 102.

<sup>114</sup> See *Rossiia i tretiy mir*, Moscow, Institut aktualnykh mezhdunarodnykh problem (IAMP), 1996.

<sup>115</sup> *Pravda*, 16 September 1987.

class, which is split into various factions, makes its own contributions to the debate aiming at revenge and revanche.<sup>116</sup> Right from the start the main thrust of the criticism was directed against the pro-Western "tilt" in Yeltsin's and Kozyrev's policy. Even according to mild critics this "tilt" turned Russia into a "junior partner" of the West, stripped it of its super-power status, undermined Russian security and damaged Moscow's economic, political and ideological interests throughout the world. Russia's stand on the former Soviet republics became the second major area of criticism. The government has been blamed for the destruction of a great state, creation of immense problems for its population, neglect of relations with the new neighbors etc.

Which alternatives have been proposed for the original policies? Though it is not easy to classify different views and positions, I would nevertheless venture to divide the debaters into four major camps (or schools of thought). The first may be called Westernizers. They clearly dominated Soviet and then Russian political life in 1990-1992.<sup>117</sup> The positions of the Westernizers have already been discussed in Part I. Here I shall just recapitulate some of their main arguments. According to the Westernizers, the confrontation between the West and the USSR which had been going on for decades was the product of the Bolsheviks' ideology and policy. This line had had disastrous consequences for the country and it had to be altered. Russia's vital interest should be to overcome the deep rift between itself and the West, created by the Bolsheviks' rule and to rejoin "the family of civilized nations." To achieve this purpose Russia would have to stop the super-power competition with the USA for the world hegemony, as such a policy would lead to a dead-end. It would trigger the expansion of NATO to the East, slow down integration into the framework of the CIS, block Russia from the main sources of technological and financial resources, revive the military confrontation in which Russia would not even have allies. Maybe only Iran or North Korea would join Russia in this struggle. But what would be the contribution of such allies towards the fulfillment of the aspirations of the Russian people?

These aspirations are very simple and clear: to finally create a normal life for themselves - prosperous, free and stable. Therefore it is not reasonable to once again invent "the unique Russian way", pushing the nation into the wild feudalism or bloody communism and making anti-Western propaganda. In order to prevent the Russian "brain drain" to the West and to raise the standard of living within the country it is necessary to promote an open market economy and develop a full-fledged democratic society in Russia. This can and should be done in cooperation and with the help of the West. There is simply no other way. All nations, without exception, which have lately achieved economic and social progress have acted exactly in this way - Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Chile, Turkey etc. Accordingly, Russian foreign policy should be subordinated to the paramount national task - to the construction of a normal human society in Russia.

The Westernizers have their own explanation for the recent unfavorable changes in the behavior of America and its allies towards Russia. The main underlying reason for those changes is the fact that the West (and Eastern Europe as well) is loosing hope in the "glorious democratic future" of Russia, due to the victories of the communists and Zhirinovskiy in the parliamentary elections. Further reasons are the continuous economic and social crisis in Russia, the fact that foreign aid is being stolen by bureaucrats and the Mafia, that laws are not applied and that foreign investors are confronted with an almost hostile attitude. The following conclusions are drawn in the West: a) a crisis-stricken country does not have good chances of becoming a stable

<sup>116</sup> For a detailed analysis of the participants of the debate see: *Ot reformy k...*, op. cit., pp. 241-250, 254-259, 262-278, 281-283; Ya. Plyas, op. cit., pp. 26-72. Eugene B. Rumer, op. cit., pp. 2-3, 18-28, 32-51.

<sup>117</sup> Views of the Westernizers served as a basis for the official policies of the Kremlin and were accepted, at least to a certain degree, by virtually all members of the government, even by those politicians, who later turned into Yeltsin's and Kozyrev's critics, left the government and joined various opposing groups.

democracy; b) extending assistance to Russia means throwing away money; c) developing business ties with it is risky; d) the rise of anti-Western extremists to power in the Kremlin is getting more and more likely.

As a consequence, the desire to expand NATO grows, the readiness to accommodate Moscow's requests and wishes is reduced and distrust regarding any actions of the Kremlin - in Chechnya, Iran or in the Far East - is increasing. Due to the changing political atmosphere the West sees the ambitions of Russia to play the role of a super-power in a different light. On one hand, Russia needs the West and depends on it. On the other hand, it challenges the West and attempts to compete with it for supremacy. In spite of the fact that there are differences in the national interests between Russia and the USA, and other Western states, the Westernizers argue that Moscow should nevertheless cope with those differences in the framework of the overall strategy of cooperation with the West.<sup>118</sup>

### ***3.2 Anti-Western camp***

The second camp is of the directly opposite opinion as the first one. It is clearly anti-Western. These people reject the notion that the West and Russia can be friends. Their belief is completely different. The thesis is advanced that for centuries the West has tried to undermine Russia's strength and influence. Back in the 13th century the Pope sent crusaders to politically and spiritually subjugate the Baltic region and then Russia. If the Russians had not fought off the invaders, it would never have become a super-power with a unique civilization. It might at best have repeated the destiny of Ukraine and Belorussia, which were conquered by Lithuanians and Poles and never came into prominence regarding international relations, economic development, or culture. In the following sevenhundred years, again and again the West attempted to achieve the ultimate goal of destroying Russia - the best known examples of such attempts were the invasions of Napoleon and Hitler. It is only by rebuffing these encroachments that Russia has managed to survive.<sup>119</sup> Finally, in the last decade of the 20th century the West, it is maintained, almost succeeded in eliminating Russia as a super-power, with the help of "traitors" like Gorbachev, Yeltsin and others. Leaders of the nationalist and communist opposition go so far as to claim that all the misfortunes experienced by the USSR and Russia in the last ten years have been planned in Washington and then executed according to this plan.<sup>120</sup> Variations of these views can be found in numerous written and oral statements of the communist leader Gennadi Zyuganov. According to Zyuganov, the West and its "lackeys" in Russia "rob our nation" and "insult the nation on purpose". They also state that "attempts are being made to tailor Russia

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<sup>118</sup> The author of this study examined views of the Westernizers in, for instance, the following articles: Ye. Bazhanov, *Diplomata vsyakiy mozhnet obidet*, in: *Segodnya*, 23 June 1995; Ye. Bazhanov, *Kogda rodina ne v opasnosti*, in: *Novoe vremya*, No. 31, 1995; Ye. Bazhanov, *ATR: ekonomicheskoe protsvetanie ne iskluchaet politicheskoi nestabilnosti*, in: *Segodnya*, 21 July 1995; Ye. Bazhanov, *Moskva i Vashington: posle "medovogo mesyatsa"*, in: *Segodnya*, 8 September 1995; E. Bazhanov, *Moscow's Hardline Shift*, in: *The Moscow Times*, 25 August 1995.

<sup>119</sup> A growingly popular thesis among nationalists and communists is the following: "Peter the Great whipped Russia and threw it to the guillotine of the West" (See: *Zavtra*, N 13 (121), March 1996, p. 1). It is said that extreme communism was also a disaster, but Stalin "revived the national empire" and "helped to win the 20th century" (See: *Pravda*, 15 February 1996).

<sup>120</sup> See *Ot reformy k...*, op. cit., pp. 103-116; ed. Ye. Bazhanov, *Rossiia i SShA v menyayushchemsya mire*, Moscow, Nauchnaya Kniga, 1996, especially pp. 29-61; B. Gromov, *O nekotorykh...*, op. cit., pp. 12-14. For the Western analysis of the phenomenon see Robert F. Miller, *Russian Policy Towards Japan*, in: ed. Peter Shearman, *Russian Foreign Policy...*, op. cit., pp. 140-141; Peter Shearman, *Russian Policy Towards the United States*, *Ibid.*, pp. 124-130.

according to overseas samples". Zyuganov stresses that "kneeling down you won't buy peace", that the Communist Party will not hesitate to terminate the unfair international treaties".<sup>121</sup>

In his book "Za gorizontom" Zyuganov argues that the Western civilization is increasingly controlled economically, culturally and ideologically by the Jewish Diaspora and "under these conditions a special significance is being acquired by the Slavic civilization embodied in the Russian Empire, which has become the last bastion against Western hegemonism".<sup>122</sup> Zyuganov's views on Jews are echoed by nationalistic parties. Jews are being blamed by them for introducing democracy to Russia "in order to destroy the unique Russian civilization". They are called the convinced enemies of the Russian people.<sup>123</sup> Among military officers and experts it has become a routine to call the USA and other NATO countries at least "opponents" and "occasional potential adversaries". Russia's capabilities are invariably compared to those of the West with the purpose of determining whether Russia can sustain a large war or several smaller ones against the West.<sup>124</sup> The USA is denounced for attempts to undermine the Russian military, economic and financial potential through the implementation of strategic armaments treaties. Nationalist authors accuse the West of trying "to lure Russia into a long and exhausting conflict against the Islamic world in order to conquer both camps and grab their resources."<sup>125</sup>

Those who share fears about the Western threat suggest various ways on how to counter the West. Most feel that Russia should seek alliances with the former Soviet republics. Statements to this effect have even been made by Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and other members of the cabinet.<sup>126</sup> Yeltsin himself and the new Foreign Minister Primakov alluded to such possibilities. The communists go further than the Kremlin. An example is the fact that the communists brought about the decision of the Russian State Duma to terminate the 1991 treaty on the dissolution of the USSR. Nationalists not only support communists in this endeavor, but have even more grandiose goals. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy would like to return to the borders of 1900, when, among other countries, Poland, Finland and Manchuria were under the Tzar's control.<sup>127</sup> Russia's final push, according to Zhirinovskiy, must be made towards the South. Conquering along the way Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Russian soldiers will reach the Indian Ocean and wash their boots in its warm waters.<sup>128</sup> Another prominent chauvinist-imperialist, the editor of the newspaper "Zavtra", Alexander Prokhanov, dreams of the Russian empire stretching from Japan to Portugal. The main obstacle to these ambitious plans is "the modern Carthage", the United States of America. Consequently, the USA "must be destroyed". Prokhanov realizes the difficulty of this task, but he is ready to fight for it, since he "loves the Russian Empire, as other people love horses, flowers or birds".<sup>129</sup>

Among those who harbor doubts or fears concerning the intentions of the West there are people who suggest other allies for Russia: some single out Iran, many prefer China.<sup>130</sup> Former Defense Minister Pavel Grachev has also hinted at the possibility of Moscow's alliance with "influential countries in the East and the South" as a response to the NATO enlargement.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> See Moskovskiy komsomolets, 18 March 1996.

<sup>122</sup> Quotations are taken from Yu. Bogomolov, Ya sprosila Gitleru, in: Izvestiya, 26 March 1996.

<sup>123</sup> See, for example, the official organ of the Union of Russian people - newspaper "Kolokol", 23 March 1996.

<sup>124</sup> Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie, 14 March 1996, pp. 6-7.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 4. See also ed. Ye. Bazhanov, Rossiya i SShA..., op. cit., pp. 153-159.

<sup>126</sup> See: Kommersant-Daily, 10 November 1995; Izvestiya, 12 December, 1995.

<sup>127</sup> V. Zhirinovskiy, Otnositelno sobiratelnoi roli Rossii i molodykh volkov, in: Izvestiya, 23 April 1994.

<sup>128</sup> Moskovskiy komsomolets, 20 October 1993.

<sup>129</sup> Zavtra, March 4, 1994.

<sup>130</sup> See Ye. Bazhanov, Diplomata vsyakiy mozhnet obidet..., op. cit.

<sup>131</sup> Izvestiya, 12 December, 1995.



### *3.3 Enemies are everywhere*

The third school of thought in the national foreign policy debate unites those who spot enemies everywhere. They call upon compatriots to close the country to the outside and maintain a tight defense system.<sup>132</sup> A typical example of such logic is a study on the armed forces reforms by a conservative think-tank, the Defense Research Institute (DRI). The study claims that Russia has numerous enemies, "who are acting more and more openly and arrogantly in the light of the weakness of the Russian state, progressing degradation of its military and economic potential".<sup>133</sup> The report specifies that "the most probable adversaries of Russia remain the United States and the NATO countries".<sup>134</sup> Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Japan are also considered among the direct threats to the Russian security, while China and Iran are excluded from the list but only for the time being. Later, the DRI believes, nuclear deterrence might also be necessary in the case of China.<sup>135</sup> According to the DRI there are also enemies of Moscow on the territory of the former Soviet Union - they are "forces of aggressive nationalism, which act with the support from outside and possess own military formations" (like the Baltic states, the Tajik opposition etc.).<sup>136</sup>

Some politicians and scholars, who are anti-Western, concentrate especially on the Chinese threat. A prominent Russian historian Professor V. Myasnikov argues: "The history of Russia's relations with China span over 400 years. But never during this whole period has China developed as fast as now. It is precisely from the Russian perspective that one can see in the clearest way the achievements of "the great dragon" and prospects of its further growth. It is not realistic to expect that China will miss its chance to derive profits from this situation".<sup>137</sup> Myasnikov goes on to say that China's "people's diplomacy" is turning into "an illegal ethnic expansion" and that Chinese businessmen "just like a giant pump suck up Russian resources and hard currency with the psychology of a rich neighbor, who intends to rob the home of an unfortunate co-peasant".<sup>138</sup> The historian claims that Chinese authorities advertise Russia as "a great Northern virgin land" where Chinese citizens can easily cheat and enrich themselves.<sup>139</sup> The Chinese presumably "look down upon the Russians and feel sure that they only temporarily have to tolerate the historical injustice of the Maritime provinces and the Amur basin areas belonging to Russia."<sup>140</sup> Myasnikov believes that the PRC authorities use the educational system, mass media, movie industry and other methods to promote the thesis that China has "lost" 1,5 million square km of its territory to Russia on the basis of "unequal treaties". Such an attitude was supported by Deng Xiaoping himself, and, as a result, the Chinese businessmen "sometimes threaten to throw their Russian customers out of the Far East."<sup>141</sup>

As for Zhirinovsky, his party's official platform as well as personal written and oral statements name China, Turkey, the Jews and the West as Russia's adversaries. China is suspected to be encroaching on Russia's Far East. Turkey is blamed for attempts to revive "the great Turkish empire". The West is denounced for its plan to turn Russia into an economic colony. And finally, the Jews are condemned for their mafia-type control of the whole world and their plan to

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<sup>132</sup> See Ye. Bazhanov, *Diplomata vsyakiy...*, op. cit.

<sup>133</sup> V. Dementyev (Lt-General), A. Surikov, *Armiya, reforma, bezopasnost*, Moscow, Institut Oboronnykh Issledovaniy, 1996, pp. 12-13.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> V. Myasnikov, *Dogovornymi statyami utverdili*, Moscow, RIO Mosobluprpoligrafizdata, 1996, p. 413.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 412.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 414.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 419.

subjugate Russia as well.<sup>142</sup> Similar views are exposed by above-mentioned newspaper "Zavtra". It writes: "Russia, deprived of everything, lacking defense, with its scattered people, encircled by enemies, flooded with traitors and scoundrels, is slowly starting to utter its secret thoughts".<sup>143</sup> Considering the depth of Russia's internal crisis which is contrasted by the widening gap between Russia and the West in terms of economic development and the steady and fast progress of China, such paranoid feelings may grow even stronger.<sup>144</sup>

### ***3.4 Balanced foreign policy***

The fourth opinion, voiced in the national debates in Russia, calls for a balanced strategy regarding foreign politics. Its essence is: Russia does not have enemies. It can and should cooperate with most countries of the world, especially the neighboring ones. Moscow should not "tilt" to any side. Because of its geographical position, size, power and history it must maintain balanced relations with the West, the East and the South without trying to ally with one or the other (possible exceptions are the CIS members).

This philosophy can be found in the platforms of the government's political union "Our Home Russia" (OHR) and "Yabloko", a democratic party of the opposition. The OHR insists on "partnership, not confrontation with other states, with both the East and the West" and "active participation in the creation of such a world order, that is based on the principles of overall security, respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states, democratic elections, protection of human rights and mutually advantageous economic cooperation."<sup>145</sup> The program of the OHR is aimed at creating a favorable international environment for internal reforms.<sup>146</sup> Again and again it stresses that Russia will pursue the development of partnerships with all countries, including China.<sup>147</sup>

"Yabloko" also rejects any imperial Russian ambitions. It supports "a widely comprehensive and serious dialogue as well as good relations with the USA, Japan and China". However, it does not feel that Russia should seek alliances. Instead, Russia should simply cooperate with all of these countries on equal terms.<sup>148</sup> As for the threats to Russia's security, "Yabloko" sees them only emanating from the southern neighbors, such as Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan and aggressive Islamic fundamentalism.<sup>149</sup> According to "Yabloko", in this respect Russia and the West have common interests (as well as in such fields as the struggle against terrorism, the proliferation of nuclear weapons etc.).<sup>150</sup>

Since 1993 Foreign Minister Kozyrev increasingly advanced the same views. They are also found in the statements of his heir Yevgeni Primakov, who, for instance, says: "Russia must conduct a diversified, active policy in all the directions, that concern Russian interests [...]; this is a vital necessity in order to create optimal conditions for the internal development, a more dynamic

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<sup>142</sup> See Golaya pravda Zhirinovskogo, in: Izvestiya, 7 October 1995, p. 4.

<sup>143</sup> Dubonosny chas Yeltsina, in: Zavtra, N 13 (121), 1996. For the paranoid ideas of threats from all directions as well as of the urge to conquer others and to expand empire see, for example, V. Zhirinovsky's book Brosok na yug, Moscow 1995; Zyuganov's books Derzhava, Moscow, 1994; Za gorizontom, Moscow, 1995.

<sup>144</sup> Russia's GNP has dropped to the level of 15% of the USA's GNP. While Russia's GNP continues to fall, China's GNP grows by over 10% annually (Commerzant-Daily, 5 October 1995).

<sup>145</sup> Vneshnyaya politika i bezopasnost [Pre-election Program of Our Home Russia], Moscow, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., pp. 7, 9.

<sup>148</sup> Programma Yabloko, Vneshnyaya politika, Moscow, 1995, p. 4.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

and more effective one, in our changing world".<sup>151</sup> There are quite a few other politicians - starting with the former State Duma Speaker Ivan Rybkin and including participants of the 1996 presidential race, Svyatoslav Fedorov and Mikhail Gorbachev, who subscribe to the above-discussed foreign policy philosophy.<sup>152</sup> Even Zyuganov, in an obvious contradiction to his other statements, has to talk in a similar fashion when addressing a Western audience. Thus, writing for the "New York Times" in 1996, the communist leader said: "Our state's unique role is to be the pivot and fulcrum of a Eurasian continental bloc - and consequently it has to find the necessary balance between East and West".<sup>153</sup>

### **3.5 Public opinion**

The most intriguing question is: which of the four opinions appeals most to the general Russian public? It is also the most difficult question. Judging on the basis of the results of the parliamentary elections in 1993 and 1995, it is certainly the xenophobic view that seems to prevail. Both parties which won the elections, the Communist Party and Zhirinovsky's Party, basically expound an anti-Western, anti-Jewish and to a certain degree anti-Islamic and anti-oriental philosophy. However, if we examine the rich data of numerous public opinion polls on foreign policy issues the picture is not so clear.

The results of the polls vary greatly due to the fact that the polls are not organized professionally, that they are often biased and that the public opinion itself is very much in flux and unstable. As some pollsters insist, no less than 70% of the Russians regret the collapse of the USSR, over 80% would welcome a revival of Russia's super-power status,<sup>154</sup> and about 50% consider Ukraine "a transitional entity" and "a Russian sphere of influence".<sup>155</sup> Certain Russian analysts believe that Zhirinovsky and other nationalists "skillfully play with some compatriots, hurt patriotic and remaining imperial feelings."<sup>156</sup> It is said that nowadays the Russians suffer from a very strong feeling of national humiliation because of the loss of their super-power status and from bitterness regarding the USA which continues to play the role of a super-power.<sup>157</sup> The following data reflects the prevailing anti-Western feelings: by 1995 72% of the Russians came to the conclusion that their country could not copy the Western model for development, 75% felt that Russia could survive without Western aid and 52% criticized the negative influence the Western mass culture has on the Russian society.<sup>158</sup>

However, other polls reveal quite different tendencies in the Russian society. These polls show that security concerns and xenophobia have not really spread throughout the Russian society. Thus, according to the national poll conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) in the summer 1993, only 5% of the respondents identified defense as the top priority, whereas 33% approved of a cooperation with other countries even if it could limit Russia's independence. The majority of the remaining 62% favored cooperation on equal terms. Half of the participants in the poll were in favor of allowing foreigners to privately own Russian enterprises.<sup>159</sup> In January 1995 a poll conducted by the Institute of Socio-Political Studies

<sup>151</sup> Ye. Primakov, *Rossiia ishchet novoe mesto v mire*, in: *Izvestiya*, 6 March 1996.

<sup>152</sup> See, for example, *Izvestiya*, 22 March 1996; *Segodnya*, 2 April 1996; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 9 April 1996; etc.

<sup>153</sup> G. Zyuganov, "Junior partner? No way", in: *The New York Times*, 1 February 1996, p. 15.

<sup>154</sup> *Izvestiya*, 13 October 1995.

<sup>155</sup> *Moskovskie Novosti*, 7 December 1993.

<sup>156</sup> *Izvestiya*, 13 October 1995.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> *Vox populi*, *opros obshchestvennogo mneniya*, Press-release, Moscow, July 1995.

<sup>159</sup> A. Lukin, *Vybory i nashi politicheskie predstavleniya*, in: *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 15 March 1996, p. 5.

of the RAS revealed that only 10% of the respondents cared about Russia's super-power status, and only 5,4% blamed their difficulties on the West, 6,1% wanted the resurrection of the USSR, but only on the principles of equality.<sup>160</sup> In another poll (in December 1995) the respondents could not care less about the NATO expansion (0,7% cared), economic pressure of the West (5% cared) or dominance of imported goods on the Russian market (7% cared). They demonstrated slightly stronger feelings about the flight of resources from Russia (14%) and the fate of the Russian diaspora (10%). Yet the same people felt that Russia's second priority was to regain the status of a strong power, the third was to overcome national humiliation. 61% of the respondents regarded the reestablishment of Russia as a super-power to be a top priority, 77% actively cared about restoring the national dignity.<sup>161</sup> Having analyzed the very contradictory data provided by the various polls we arrived at the conclusion that what really counts now in Russia (as far as foreign policy priorities are concerned) are the prevailing moods in the politically active circles. After all, ordinary Russians have a tradition that reaches back for centuries to stay away from state issues, especially those connected with security and foreign policy matters. The public has been used to following the leaders' views on these topics (actually, this also seems to be true in the West).

## **Part IV. Motives**

Due to the impact of internal and external factors and specifically the national debates, described in Part III, the initial foreign policy motives of the new Russia are being gradually modified. The Kremlin has taken the strong domestic criticism into account. It has realized that democratic values and economic reforms no longer trigger enthusiastic responses on the part of many politically active Russians, that the West is not adored, that the bitterness over the break-up of the USSR has been growing, that former friends of the USSR (communist and developing countries) are no longer abhorred by most Russian political elites and that those elites are tired of making concessions and asking forgiveness in the international arena.

### ***4.1 National security***

Security concerns are starting to move back to the forefront. Despite pressure from the ranks of the conservatives, the Kremlin does not perceive the West as a direct threat.<sup>162</sup> However, the feeling persists that if Russia falls too much behind the leading powers in the military realm, it could become subject to manipulation and intimidation. There is a growing apprehension that the West, if it is not controlled, may come to dominate Russia economically, may exclude it from Europe, deny it access to Eastern Europe and former parts of the USSR and that a new "encirclement of the Motherland" may start forming. Such worries, greatly enhanced by the plans for the expansion of NATO, are no longer limited to the extremist camp and are spreading through the entire establishment of the Russian Federation.<sup>163</sup> In the eyes of the Russians the expansion of NATO to Eastern Europe will in the long run lead to a new division of the continent, dangerous to the peace and to the development in Russia. It is also a common belief in Moscow these days that while Russia step by step tries to get closer to the former union republics,

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> VTsIOM poll, December 1995. See, *Segodnya*, 10 February 1996.

<sup>162</sup> On a number of occasions Foreign Minister Ye. Primakov has reiterated this thesis, which was already put forward by his predecessor, stressing that one can talk of a "civilized partnership" with the former adversaries and of a "privileged partnership" with some of them (see Ye. Primakov, *Rossiia ishchet...*, op. cit.).

<sup>163</sup> Ed. Ye. Bazhanov, *Rossiia i SShA v menyayushchemsya mire...*, op. cit., pp. 37-61, 87-96.

the West encourages them to strengthen their independence and look for partners outside the perimeter of the defunct Soviet Union.<sup>164</sup> As Russian officials complain, the United States and its allies attempt to attract the newly independent states with the help of "small and insignificant favors". However, the Western powers "do not really do anything" to help these crisis-stricken states. That burden still rests on the shoulders of Russia.<sup>165</sup>

"The aim of the West", a leading Russian politician declared at a high level meeting, "is to cut Russia off from the CIS countries, to restrict its field of activity and to make it passive and weak in the international arena."<sup>166</sup> It is regularly suggested in the Russian press (both by officials and journalists) that the CIA assists in the creation and development of the secret services of the Baltic republics and Georgia, and that Americans use Russia's new neighbors to steal Moscow's secrets and undermine its strength.<sup>167</sup>

Security concerns associated with Russia's immediate neighbors are even more obvious.<sup>168</sup> The situation in Tajikistan and on its borders to Afghanistan is perceived as a direct threat to Russia's vital interests.<sup>169</sup> Just a couple of years ago, Yeltsin and his associates used to denounce the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. Now, Yeltsin declares the borders of Tajikistan to Afghanistan to be Russian and, responding to the appeals of the Tajik authorities, keeps reinforcing Russian troops in the area. There they clash with the same *mujahidin*, who were the adversaries of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Yeltsin justifies his actions on the basis of anxiety concerning Muslim extremist groups. If successful, these groups would threaten the well-being and lives of ethnic Russians in Tajikistan as well as the economic and geo-strategic interests of Russia. The other republics of Central Asia would follow suit and a hostile wave would hit the Russian Federation.

The Caucasus region is another security concern. It is fraught with conflict - Armenia and Azerbaijan fighting over Nagorny Karabakh and the ethnic Georgian minorities, the Abkhazians and South Ossetians, fighting one another. The high mountains in that area are inhabited by Russia's own ethnic minorities, some of whom (especially Chechens) cause Moscow tremendous problems. The region appears even more ominous because of attempts of Turkey and a number of Arab states to interfere in these conflicts on the side of the Muslim participants (Azeris and various mountain tribes).<sup>170</sup> The Baltic states ignite the Kremlin's security concerns with their mistreatment of local Russians, the denunciation of the Soviet Union's activities during World War II as well as their (Latvian, Estonian) territorial demands with regard to Russia. It is feared that Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians might be the first to "start rebuilding the iron curtain" at the Western borders of Russia<sup>171</sup> and that Moscow could be denied access to the Baltic sea and its warm-water ports. Kaliningrad, the only remaining Russian foothold in the area, is separated

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<sup>164</sup> Lately complaints are heard that Washington is "trying hard to drive a wedge between Kiev and Moscow" in order to use Ukraine as "the main guarantee against the return of a unified state to the world arena", *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 23 March 1996, p. 3.

<sup>165</sup> Ed. Ye. Bazhanov, *Rossiya i SShA...*, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>166</sup> *Segodnya*, 10 February 1996.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> The Russian military doctrine stresses the necessity to create a new security belt along the borders of the former Soviet Union, to safeguard the country against various conflicts and the attempts of hostile forces to fill the political and military vacuum (See: *Krasnaya zvezda*, 19 November 1993). The government feels that "Russia should bear the main burden of peace-keeping efforts on the territory of the CIS" and that the stability in this region is "directly linked to the security of our state". (Ed. A. Shutov, *Problemy SNG...*, op. cit., p. 12).

<sup>169</sup> Eugene Bazhanov and Natasha Bazhanova, *Russia and Asia in 1993...*, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>170</sup> Ed. A. Shutov, *Problemy SNG...*, op. cit., pp. 22-32.

<sup>171</sup> *Rossiya i Baltika*, Moscow, IAMP, 1996 (in print), pp. 18, 33, 40.

from the rest of the country by Lithuania. Germans, who used to own Kaliningrad (then called Koenigsberg), might one day seek its recovery with Lithuanian collaboration.<sup>172</sup>

The dispute with Ukraine over the ownership of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, its base in Sevastopol, and the whole Crimean peninsula, as well as tensions involving Russians in Moldova, add to the security concerns shaping the Russian foreign policy.<sup>173</sup> There are also fears of a less immediate nature - the ever-tense situation in Korea, the drama of the former Yugoslavia, the Middle Eastern cauldron and the Japanese claim on the South Kuril islands.<sup>174</sup>

As a result of all these incidents, trends and events, security measures are being increased by the Russian authorities. The armed forces, which were downgraded in the recent past, have moved back into the centre of attention. The grandeur of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the victory over fascism in May 1995 even surpassed that of the celebrations in the Brezhnev era (which was famous for celebrating that day with tremendous pomp). The victors were given new locations for celebration purposes in the most prestigious part of Moscow. A new monument to the war hero Marshal Zhukov was erected. The government is also emphasising the development of modern weaponry and the necessity of effective, strong armed forces to maintain a balance with the world's major military powers.<sup>175</sup> No one talks about the total elimination of nuclear weapons anymore (as Gorbachev had done). They are in fact recognized as the most reliable guarantee for Russian security.<sup>176</sup> The "perestroika" slogan of opening the borders and destroying barriers among peoples has been replaced with the thesis of reinforcing border troops and making the Russian territory (and that of the other CIS members) impenetrable for violators and enemies.<sup>177</sup> The military activities of former adversaries and all Russia's neighbors are watched attentively. A general from the Defense ministry asked recently: "Why do the Japanese retain more troops on Hokkaido than we have on the Kuril islands? Isn't it possible, that they have some kind of plan to take the Kurils by force?"<sup>178</sup>

Foreign intelligence, which was castigated back in 1992 as "the subversive arm" of Soviet communism, has regained its respect in the eyes of both, society and the government. The arrest of Mr. Ames, a Russian agent within the CIA, was interpreted in Moscow as a serious blow to national security.<sup>179</sup> It has also become fashionable for retired (and even active) intelligence officers to recount their noble actions for the good of the Motherland on Russian TV.

Security motives move Moscow in the direction of creating a collective security system with other CIS states.<sup>180</sup> There is a growing urge on the part of the Kremlin to restore the cooperation with the Soviet friends in the Third World. This is based, among other things, on security reasons. Political leaders have come to realize that balancing the Western connection with partnerships in the East and the South (i.e. China, India, ASEAN, the Arab countries etc.) the Kremlin will be able to act more confidently in the international arena. Russia will be better

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>173</sup> V. Portnikov, *Debyut integratora*, in: *Itogi*, 12 February 1996, p. 30.

<sup>174</sup> The military and most notably former Defense Minister Pavel Grachev clearly repudiated Yeltsin's promises to withdraw troops from the Kurils as "a blow to Russia's national security" (see Reuters Textline, 6 April 1992).

<sup>175</sup> Yu. Fedorov, *Voennaya doktrina Rossii*, in: *Ot reformy k...*, op. cit., pp. 103-119.

<sup>176</sup> The Chief of the Russian General Staff Mikhail Kolesnikov characterizes the nuclear force as "the guarantor of the national security of the Russian state, its pride and the foundation of its might" (Yu. Fedorov, *Voennaya doktrina...*, op. cit., pp. 103-119).

<sup>177</sup> See, for example, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 10 September 1995.

<sup>178</sup> Proceedings of a seminar on Security in the Far East, 5 March 1996, Moscow, IAMP (unpublished).

<sup>179</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2 April 1994.

<sup>180</sup> B. Gromov, *O nekotorykh...*, op. cit., p. 11.

prepared for any sudden changes in world politics and economics.<sup>181</sup> It is also argued that co-operative relations with Iran and extremist Arab regimes will help to deter their interference (ideological, religious and military) in Russia's ethnic affairs. Vietnam is important as a naval base for the Russian fleet in the Pacific, Mongolia as a buffer against possible future encroachments by an increasingly powerful China. Rapprochement with North Korea will make it possible to restrain that dangerous regime etc.

#### ***4.2 Nationalism and super-power ambitions***

Nationalism is another increasingly prominent feature of Moscow's international posture. After having ignored the problem for a long time, the government has at last identified the protection of the Russian-speaking population outside Russia's borders as a priority.<sup>182</sup> Yeltsin refused to withdraw troops from Latvia and Estonia until the civil rights of the local Russians were guaranteed. Pressure is put on the authorities of the former Asian republics of the USSR to allow dual citizenship and equal rights for their Russian inhabitants. Various plans to facilitate the resettlement of Russians on Russian territory are advanced by the government (though not implemented in the crisis-stricken and chaotic conditions of today). Moscow reacts strongly to any signs of anti-Russian feelings in the "near abroad": belittling Russia's past, destruction of monuments to Russian heroes etc.<sup>183</sup>

Attempts are made by the authorities to placate the national feelings of the Russians - through historical references and the commemoration of historic dates and great achievements of our forerunners. The ethnic self-criticism (in newspapers, on stage, in TV programs etc.) that was typical in the "perestroika" period, is almost a self-imposed taboo now. Instead, newspapers, scholars, economists and politicians compete to prove the superiority of the Russians over other nations i.e. in the sciences, arts, sports, and even racial or biological characteristics. The tsarist era which was castigated under the communist system is now presented as a golden age.<sup>184</sup> Even the communist epoch is being less criticized lately. Arguments are found to defend Moscow's behavior during the Cold War, to justify its policies in Eastern Europe, vis-a-vis China, in the field of the arms race etc.

The new attitude is reflected in Moscow's disillusion about the effectiveness and correctness of the policy of repentance at large. Yeltsin's advisors have come to realize that self-criticism of the Soviet past does not bring positive results. Rather than appreciation Russia's partners show disdain and look for vengeance for the crimes of previous Kremlin leaders. In accordance with this new approach, Moscow refused to take the blame for the shooting-down of the South Korean passenger plane over Sakhalin in 1983. It also refuses to sign agreements with Rumania and Hungary which contain any confession of Soviet guilt. Moscow's invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia are no longer discussed. Afghanistan is remembered only in the context of fallen and wounded Russian soldiers. Their sacrifice is praised. Only on rare occasions does a Russian official now agree that the USSR bore responsibility for the Cold War and the arms race.

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<sup>181</sup> For the discussion of this issue see: Rossiya i SShA..., op. cit., pp. 79-152.

<sup>182</sup> Even back in October 1992 Yeltsin seriously criticized the Russian Foreign Ministry and accused it of displaying "the imperial syndrome in reverse", i.e. of being too shy in speaking about national interests in the "near abroad" for fear of being accused of "super-power chauvinism" (RIA Novosti, 27 October 1992). Finally, Foreign Minister Kozyrev started to stress that Russia intended "to strictly uphold the interests of the Russian-speaking population and stand up for them wherever they might be". (The Washington Post, 10 October 1993).

<sup>183</sup> Ed. A. Shutov, Problemy SNG..., op. cit., pp. 50-60, 92-104; Rossiya i Baltika..., op. cit., pp. 14-18.

<sup>184</sup> See, for example, Nezavisimaya gazeta, 16 May 1995; Segodnya, 12 October 1995.

Nationalism is closely connected with the Russian super-power ambitions regarding its foreign policy. Russians do not simply want to gain any place under the sun, but a special place. These feelings, temporarily lost during the initial chaotic period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, have resurfaced in the society and are shaping the Russian foreign policy doctrine.<sup>185</sup> Every important document, issued by Yeltsin's administration and the Foreign Ministry, contains direct or indirect references to the necessity of restoring Russia's super-power status. As the Russian Foreign Minister started to say in 1993-1994, "Russia is destined to be a super-power."<sup>186</sup>

Russia's super-power ambitions are reflected in the growing claims of the Kremlin to play the pivotal role throughout the former Soviet Union, to be the arbiter, the policeman and the military, political, economic as well as spiritual leader of the vast region.<sup>187</sup> In addition to entering the exclusive club of "G7", Moscow insists on having its own distinctive position regarding every international issue. It refuses to automatically accept Western initiatives as was the case not long ago.<sup>188</sup> The Kremlin increasingly manifests its inclination to participate in the discussion and solution of all major international disputes, be they in the Middle East or in the South Pacific. It is eager to show its flag on all four continents.<sup>189</sup> Powerful lobbies - consisting of engineers, diplomats, military officers, scholars, whose careers had been associated with the allies and friends of the USSR - push for the restoration of traditional ties. Their arguments are: "a) we've put a lot of effort, money and resources into these regions; b) we've helped to create those regimes and we are responsible for their future; c) leaders come and go, but traditional friendships remain and d) in our turbulent times, the world situation changes so fast that we might need our former allies again".<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> It is true, however, that various scholars and journalists as well as some government officials continue to argue that "for now Russia cannot claim to be a super-power due to its declining economic development and the uncertain and unstable situation in the society as a whole". (Ya. Plyas, op. cit., p. 50; V. Razuvaev, *Mezhdunarodnyi faktor v presidentskoi kampanii*, in: *Segodnya*, 29 March 1996).

<sup>186</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 29 January 1994. In its discussions with the West the Kremlin invariably demands conditions "corresponding to the size, importance and capabilities of Russia" (See: *Vneshnopoliticheskie prioritety*, Moscow, IAMP, 1996, p. 23). Security Council Deputy Secretary Valery Manilov said about the newly adopted military doctrine: "The characteristics of Russia as a super-power are that it covers one-sixth of the world's land surface and that it is inhabited by a unique Greater Russian multinational people [...] which has its own Russian Interests." (As quoted in: D. Simes, op. cit., p. 80).

<sup>187</sup> In February 1993, Yeltsin formulated what became known in the West as "the Yeltsin doctrine": Moscow's intention to exercise special rights and take on special responsibilities throughout the former Soviet Union (*New York Times*, 1 March 1993). On this subject see also *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 January 1994; *The Moscow Times*, 20 January 1994.

<sup>188</sup> In this context a Western scholar remarked that after 1992 "Russian diplomats and officials from the Foreign Ministry began to advocate Russia's position in various bilateral and multilateral forums much more energetically than they had done in 1992. [...] Senior Military figures and the Ministers of Defense, Internal Security, and Foreign Intelligence [...] began to articulate more pragmatic and conditional backing for Russia's policy regarding the United States. Even Kozyrev [...] began to tone down his enthusiasm for forging a "partnership" with the United States. (Peter Shearman, *Russian Policy Toward the United States*, op. cit., p. 128). Even back in the summer of 1992, Kozyrev talked about the necessity for Russia not to follow the lead of the West automatically, but "to play solo more often" instead. (See *Novoe Vremya*, No. 23, 1993).

<sup>189</sup> As one Russian political analyst argued, the status of Russia "should be determined by its nuclear and military power which is far greater than that of other countries" (Alexander Golz, *Russia's Role in Europe*, in: *The Moscow Times*, 21 May 1994). Nowadays, government officials state that the thrust of Moscow's policy should focus on achieving "equality and on the rejection of one-sided concessions by Russia" (*Rossiia i SShA...*, op. cit., pp. 8-9).

<sup>190</sup> *New Times*, No. 36, 1992; Dawid Warszawski, *Powrót do Cam Ranh*, in: *Rzeczpospolita*, 25-26 July 1992, p. 5; *Asia-Pacific Defense Reporter*, Vol. XIX, No. 415, October-November 1992, p. 21; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 10 August 1993.



Super-power ambitions even take the form of long-forgotten Pan-Slavistic and Orthodox solidarity. Many politicians insist on a pro-Serbian policy in the Balkans because Serbs are Orthodox Slavs and because tsarist Russia had always defended them. Moscow is not pleased with the attempts by the USA and its NATO allies to determine the destiny of the Balkans without Russian consent. Moreover, the Kremlin insists on having an independent position even if it does agree with the West on certain aspects of the Yugoslavian problem. The restoration of the Russian presence in Palestine is justified on the grounds that Russia had a long-standing presence there in previous centuries.<sup>191</sup>

The temptation to retain global involvement is growing under the influence of many former friends and clients of the USSR. Most of them, starting with India and including Libya and Cuba, need ties with Russia for various strategic, economic and internal political reasons. They warn Moscow against "a futile" policy of reliance on the West and urge it to resume the posture of a close friend of the developing nations. What impresses the Kremlin even more is that previously hostile states like Israel, Saudi Arabia, Oman etc. display an obvious interest in a more stable Russian presence in their regions - as an indispensable power-broker in the settlement of disputes and (or) as a counter-balance to the excessive influence of the United States.<sup>192</sup> This interest is reinforced by an added cultural factor: in Syria, for example, many members of the political elite were educated in the Soviet Union and some are married to Russian women.

The Russian foreign policy is also strongly determined by economic motives. Russia badly needs enormous transfers of know-how and technology, capital, expertise and goods. The government realizes that without external aid reforms will not be able to continue. The Kremlin also knows that only foreign capital can help create a true market economy in Russia.<sup>193</sup> In addition, goods from abroad are sought by tens of thousands of traders and millions of consumers (these goods range from oranges to advanced computers). The only way to pay for these products and services is to export raw materials and finished goods. Finding proper markets for oil, tanks, buses etc. is a powerful motive driving Russian diplomacy.<sup>194</sup> Moscow sells weapons to its former foe China with the same ease as it sells them to potential Chinese adversaries in India and Vietnam. The economic damage of withdrawal from the Third World is a popular topic of discussion in the Russian capital. Many nations owe Moscow billions of dollars. The only way to make them pay their debts, if not now then at least some time in the future, is to restore friendly ties with the ruling regimes of those countries. Besides, trade and some forms of economic cooperation between Russia and these countries could be profitable. Economic considerations played a role in the reluctance of Moscow to agree to UN-sponsored sanctions against, among other countries, Iraq, North Korea and Serbia.

The economic factor, on one hand, pushes Russia to develop close ties with all states. On the other hand, the Kremlin believes it has to protect the country and its weak producers from foreign competition and to prevent the flight of valuable resources and the export of treasures and other items from Russia at low prices.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No. 6, 1995.

<sup>192</sup> *Diplomaticheskii Ezhegodnik*, op. cit., pp. 102-104.

<sup>193</sup> *Mezhdunarodnye operatsii rossiyskikh bankov*, Moscow, Nauchnaya Kniga, 1996, pp. 10, 34-40, 60-65.

<sup>194</sup> A governmental document stressed in 1993: "Russia's political influence should now be directed at the strengthening of the positions of our enterprises in the foreign markets, at increasing exports, at the liquidation of discriminating barriers and the improvement of trade and other economic links". (See *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 8 December 1993).

<sup>195</sup> See: *Segodnya*, 30 October 1993; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 11 November 1993; *Segodnya*, 9 February 1994; *Moskovskie Novosti*, 3-10 April 1994.

Among other things, ideology also plays a part with regard to Moscow's activities abroad, although the influence of this factor is different from what it used to be back in 1992. At that time, as we have already mentioned above, Russian democrats clung to the Western world and hailed its values, while denouncing human rights violators and dictators. The ideological love affair with the West is no longer dominant. Passion for spreading the democratic gospel has faded.<sup>196</sup> The forces that do not accept Western democratic values are strong again. They are shifting the Russian public's focus of attention to opposite models of development: those of China, Chile, Singapore or South Korea.<sup>197</sup>

The government does not object: it shares respect for the achievements of these countries. And it certainly feels that Moscow is not in a position to give ideological lessons to others. First of all, Russian democracy has to overcome the Chechen crisis, instability and an economic crisis back home. Second, the Kremlin would not be supported by its own people. It is not by accident that Chinese leaders when visiting Western Europe are confronted by angry human rights activists. In Russia Chinese leaders do not have to worry about any protests of this sort. Third, the American example is cited: the USA makes friendships and keep them according to its needs - be they economic, strategic or political. It continues to develop relations with authoritarian oil-rich regimes of the Persian Gulf and non-democratic Singapore. But Washington puts pressure on the democratic governments of New Zealand or France, when they hurt military, political or economic interests of the United States.<sup>198</sup>

Consequently, Yeltsin prefers the former member of the Brezhnev leadership, Heidar Aliiev, much more as a leader of Azerbaijan than his predecessor El-Chibei. Aliiev is more or less pro-Russian, while El-Chibei, for all his democratic and anti-communist rhetoric, proved to be anti-Russian as he pushed Azerbaijan into the embrace of the Muslim world. In Tajikistan Moscow supports those who are loyal, not those who speak favorably of democracy. The same applies to Russia's posture regarding Ukraine, Belorussia, Kazakhstan and other former republics of the USSR. Loyal leaders are needed to defend basic Russian interests in the "near abroad" which are often violated by those paying lip-service to democracy or even those who are truly democratic minded nationalists.

Thus, ideology is still present in Russian foreign policy: The country studies various ideas, compares them and finds useful aspects not only in Western ideology. At the same time Russian diplomacy is growing more and more pragmatic.<sup>199</sup> Both, the US and China are considered to be important partners, and ideology is not an obstacle to good relations with either. The same goes for Germany and Syria, Cuba and France. The intensity of ties with these and other countries is determined by many factors, but not by ideological sympathies or antipathies.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Ye. Primakov, *Rossiya ishchet...*, op. cit.

<sup>197</sup> Arkady Volsky, a prominent Russian politician representing industrial circles, said in an interview with *Newsweek*: "Our situation is much closer to the Chinese situation than to the experience of any other country. We should study their experience in conducting a land reform, as well as their experience concerning state support of the private sector with the help of laws, taxation, investments etc." (*Newsweek*, No. 29 1992).

<sup>198</sup> Ed. Ye. Bazhanov, *Rossiya i SShA...*, op. cit., pp. 79-145.

<sup>199</sup> As a knowledgeable Western observer concluded, "pragmatism, realism and gradualism have emerged as the key themes of the new Russian consensus in the areas of national security and foreign policy" (Eugene B. Rumer, *Russian National...*, op. cit., p. VIII).

<sup>200</sup> Even back in 1992 A. Kozyrev pointed out: "We have rejected the missionizing of the Communist era ... We work with every state according to the principle of ironing out problems that divide us and utilizing for the common good that which brings us closer". (See A. Kozyrev, *When we abandoned missionizing*, in: *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 21 January 1992).

## V. Conclusion

The above-mentioned motives are gradually changing the pattern of the Russian foreign policy, its original aims and methods. Some of the changes came as a spontaneous response to the new realities inside and outside Russia. Others were sharply contested by various branches of government and individual leaders. Kozyrev for one consistently resisted attempts to move too far away from the West and refused to formulate a revised strategy.<sup>201</sup>

Until now, the new overall strategy has not found its final shape. Yet, it looks like a certain consensus in being reached at least within the executive branch of the government and the democratic and centrist opposition to the government. In essence, its aims are to make Russian diplomacy less pro-Western and more balanced, more security-minded, super-power oriented, economically-motivated and pragmatic.<sup>202</sup> On the basis of the realities inside and outside Russia as well as the prevailing opinions of the Russian political and economic elites we may venture to predict that the development will continue in the direction of the described policy. The "near abroad" will dominate Russia's diplomatic agenda thus reflecting internal politics<sup>203</sup>, the vital necessity for integration and the irresistible urge to restore the traditional sphere of influence. The road to integration will be a bumpy one due to suspicions of the CIS countries' elites and the positions of the West and Southern neighbors of the former Soviet republics.

Bilateral and international differences, especially concerning the expansion of NATO and Russia's bitterness over the lost super-power status will mar Moscow's partnership with the West. However, the partnership will survive.

First, Russia does not have the strength to afford a general confrontation with the major world powers. At the moment, its armed forces are no match for the combined military machinery of its potential foes. Russia's military system is disorganized and its technology deteriorating. The geo-strategic position of Russia is even less favorable. The front line has moved from the middle of Germany to the Russian-Ukrainian border. No government could dream of confrontational policies under such strategic circumstances.

Second, the authorities would have to improve the crisis-stricken Russian economy - both, to bolster military strength and to meet the expectations of the tired and disillusioned population. This cannot be done without importing technology, capital and management know-how. For this reason and also in order to secure the necessary income by exporting raw materials Russia will have to keep the doors to the world open and remain flexible in its relations with the most developed nations on the planet.

Third, there is basically no major ideological issue which (under any leader) could drive a wedge between Russia and the developed countries. Russia has no choice but to strive to build a modern society along the lines of Western Europe or America.

Fourth, the Russian people are fed up with confrontations and wars - even the domestic operation against Chechen separatists has not gathered a popular support.

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<sup>201</sup> Ed. Peter Shearman, Russian Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>202</sup> This fact is recognized by many authors. See, for example, *Diplomaticheskiy Ezhegodnik*, Moscow, op. cit., pp. 20, 32-35, 44, 62-66, 101-115. Actually some aspects of the changes in Moscow's strategy concerning foreign affairs even suit moderate communists and nationalists: they have supported Russia's entry into the European Council, and they agree with Yeltsin's current stand on NATO.

<sup>203</sup> A competition has already developed between the pro-communist State Duma and Yeltsin's administration on this issue. In the spring of 1996, the Duma terminated the 1991 treaty on the dissolution of the USSR. Yeltsin responded by forging the Community of Belorussia and Russia as well as the "Union of four": Russia, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan (*Izvestiya*, 4 April 1996).

Regarding the West, Russia does not pose a strong enough geopolitical challenge to unite the Western powers and make them pool their resources against Moscow.

More energetic Russian activities are to be expected in Asia and the Pacific (especially China), in the Middle East and South Asia. In most cases the Kremlin will get a positive response from the prospective partners. The new (or renewed) Russian friendships will create some anxiety in the West and inside the above-mentioned regions. For example, Japan might not like further rapprochement between Moscow and Beijing, but the misunderstandings and tensions will be limited and controllable. Moscow will not sacrifice its relations with the West for its friends in the Third World. All in all, Russia will most probably be one of the power centers in the emerging multipolar world - no more aggressive or specific in its behavior than others.

**Yevgeni Bazhanov**

## **Russia's Changing Foreign Policy**

**Bericht des BIOst Nr. 30/1996**

### **Summary**

#### *Introductory Remarks*

This report seeks to describe and analyze the Russian foreign policy as it evolved from being clearly pro-Western back in 1991-1992 to a more balanced and nationalistic version by the mid-1990s. In addition certain projections for the future are made.

#### *Findings*

1. In many ways the foreign policy of the new Russia was a continuation of Gorbachev's "new thinking". Gorbachev set the Soviet Union on the path of partnership with the Western alliance by clearing away the military and political legacy of Stalinism-Brezhnevism. This strategy enjoyed full support of the democratic movement headed by Yeltsin.
2. After coming to power democrats, however, dissociated themselves from Gorbachev's "new thinking". They argued that while Gorbachev had continued "to divide the world into two camps", they were about to initiate "a completely fresh policy of unrestrained partnership and integration with the West". Indeed, this kind of policy was put into action as the Russian democrats saw the Western nations as being their chief ideological and political allies, the main source of economic aid and a model for Russia's development.
3. The promotion of ties with former Soviet republics - now independent states - became another new part of Russian diplomacy. Yeltsin and his entourage believed that the dissolution of the USSR and the destruction of communism opened wide vistas for a real friendship and fruitful cooperation among new neighbors.
4. Finally, there was a rejection of the communist heritage. Moscow displayed a willingness to admit and correct historical misdeeds of the USSR. The democratic government toned down its activities in Eastern Europe as well as distanced itself from the remaining communist regimes and radical Third World friends of the USSR. Neither of them showed much enthusiasm for cooperation with the new Russia (for various reasons).
5. With time, a number of internal and external factors started to influence Yeltsin's original strategy. Internally, failure of "shock therapy" led to the weakening of democrats and strengthening of the communists and nationalists. The conservative pressure on the foreign policy emanates not only from the opposition but also from inside the reshuffled government.
6. Externally, Russia has become disappointed with the behavior of the West: it has failed to be a reliable ideological and political ally; the aid is limited; the Western model does not seem to work on Russian soil. Relations with the former Soviet republics also proved to be

thorny. Controversies developed over the Russian diaspora, property division, arbitrary borders etc. Due to Russia's retreat from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world, there were clear losses i.e. economic, geopolitical, cultural and also in prestige.

7. Yeltsin's and Kozyrev's foreign policy became the target of criticism, which grew into a full-scale national debate. The debaters split into four major camps. The first, consisting of Westernizers, continues to defend basic aspects of the initial strategy. The opposite camp considers the West to be an eternal enemy of Russia and proposes to counter the alleged Western threat through alliances - with the CIS countries, Iran or China. There are also those, who see enemies of Russia throughout the world. They call for a comprehensive defense of the Motherland. The fourth camp, uniting many democrats and centrists, suggests a more balanced world strategy, open and cooperative, but without a pro-Western "tilt". As for the Russian public, its views are in flux and unstable. In general, the public still follows the political leaders' opinions (as has been a long-standing tradition).
8. As a result of the internal and external influences and specifically the national debates the initial motives of the new Russia's foreign policy are being gradually modified. Russia again puts an emphasis on security, strong armed forces, foreign intelligence and forging strategic partnerships in various regions. Nationalism finds an expression in the protection of the Russian diaspora, glorification of the Russian imperial past and scaling down the policy of repentance for the misdeeds of the Communist regime. Russia's super-power ambitions can be observed in its growing claims to playing the pivotal role throughout the former Soviet Union, to enter the exclusive club of "G7", to show the Russian flag on all four continents. Democratic ideas do not influence the Kremlin's relations with other states anymore, while economic interests encourage Moscow to restore cooperation with many Third World nations.
9. The revised overall strategy of Russia has not yet taken its final shape. However, a certain consensus seems to be forming within the society. Its essence is to make Russian diplomacy less pro-Western and more balanced, more security-minded, super-power oriented, economically-motivated and pragmatic. The "near abroad" will dominate Russia's diplomatic agenda, but the road to any kind of integration will be a bumpy one. Bilateral and international differences will mar Moscow's partnership with the West. However, the partnership will survive. Both sides neither have sufficient reasons nor the means to return to the collision course. At the same time, one can expect a more energetic Russian drive in Asia and the Pacific, in the Middle East and South Asia. All in all, Russia will most probably be one of the power centers in the emerging multipolar world, no more aggressive or specific in its behavior than others.